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# AN ESSAY

ON

## DECISION OF CHARACTER.

By JOHN FOSTER.

### LETTER I.

*Examples of the Distress and Humiliation incident to an irresolute Mind. Such a Mind cannot be said to belong to itself. Manner in which a Man of decisive Spirit deliberates, and passes into action. Cæsar. Such a Spirit prevents the Fretting away, in harrassing Altercations of Will, of the animated Feelings required for sustaining the vigor of Action. Averts impertinent Interference. Acquires, if free from Harshness of Manner, an undisputed and beneficial Ascendency over Associates. Its last resource inflexible Pertinacity. Instance in a Man on a Jury.*

MY DEAR FRIEND—We have several times talked of this bold quality, and acknowledged its great importance. Without it, a human being, with powers at best but feeble, and surrounded by innumerable things tending to perplex, to divert, or to oppress their operations, is, indeed, a pitiable atom, the sport of diverse and casual impulses. It is a poor and disgraceful thing, not to be able to reply, with some degree of certainty, to the simple questions, What will you be? What will you do?

A little acquaintance with mankind will supply numberless illustrations of the importance of this character. You will often

NOTE.—The Review of this work, by Robert Hall, was inserted, in our Second volume, through mistake, in place of the original work. We now present to our Readers the *bona fide* ESSAY, than which, a more masterly work, on this subject, never appeared in print. The Review, however, is no ordinary production; and will, we doubt not, be regarded as enhancing the value of the Library. We design to obviate all errors of this kind; but we are glad that, in this instance, our blunder is the Readers' gain.—*Publisher.*

VOL. 3.—A.

see a person anxiously hesitating a long time between different, or opposite determinations, though impatient of the pain of such a state, and ashamed of its debility. A faint impulse of preference alternates towards the one and toward the other; and the mind, while thus held in a trembling balance, is vexed that it cannot get some new thought, or feeling, or motive, that it has not more sense, more resolution, more of any thing that would save it from envying even the decisive instinct of brutes. It wishes that any circumstance might happen, or any person might appear, that could deliver it from the miserable suspense.

In many instances, when a determination is adopted, it is frustrated by this indecision. A man, for example, resolves to make a journey to-morrow, which he is not under an absolute necessity to make, but the inducements appear, this evening so strong, that he does not think it possible he can hesitate in the morning. In the morning, however, these inducements have unaccountably lost much of their force. Like the sun that is rising at the same time, they appear dim through a mist; and the sky lowers, or he fancies that it lowers; recollections of toils and fatigues ill repaid in past expeditions rise and pass into anticipation; and he lingers uncertain, till an advanced hour determines the question for him, by the certainty that it is now too late to go.

Perhaps a man has conclusive reasons for wishing to remove to another place of residence. But when he is going to take the first actual step towards executing his purpose, he is met by a new train of ideas, presenting the possible, and magnifying the unquestionable, disadvantages and uncertainties of a new situation, awakening the natural reluctance to quit a place to which habit has accommodated his feelings, and which has grown warm to him, if I may so express

it, by his having been in it so long; giving new strength to his affection for the friends whom he must leave, and so detaining him still lingering, long after his serious judgment may have dictated to him to be gone.

A man may think of some desirable alteration in his plan of life; perhaps in the arrangements of his family, or in the mode of his intercourse with society. Would it be a good thing? He thinks it would be a good thing. It certainly would be a very good thing. He wishes it were done. He will attempt it *almost* immediately. The following day he doubts whether it would be quite prudent. Many things are to be considered. May there not be in the change some evil of which he is not aware? Is this a proper time? What will the people say? And thus, though he does not formally renounce his purpose, he shrinks out of it, with a wish that he could be fully satisfied of the propriety of renouncing it. Perhaps he wishes that the thought had never occurred to him, since it has diminished his self-complacency, without promoting his virtue. But the next day, his conviction of the wisdom and advantage of such a reform comes again with great force. Then, Is it so practicable, as I was at first willing to imagine? Why not? Other men have done much greater things; a resolute mind is omnipotent; difficulty is a stimulus and a triumph to a strong spirit; "the joys of conquest are the joys of man." What need I care about people's opinion? It shall be done. He makes the first attempt. But some unexpected obstacle presents itself; he feels the awkwardness of attempting an unaccustomed manner of acting; the questions or the ridicule of his friends disconcert him; his ardor abates and expires. He again begins to question, whether it be wise, whether it be necessary, whether it be possible; and at last surrenders his purpose, to be, perhaps, resumed when the same feelings return, and to be in the same manner again relinquished.

While animated by some magnanimous sentiments which he has heard or read, or while musing on some great example, a man may conceive the design, and partly sketch the plan, of a generous enterprize; and his imagination revels in the felicity that would follow, to others and to himself from its accomplishment. The splendid representation always centres in himself, as the hero that is to realize it.

Yet a certain consciousness in his mind doubtfully asks, Is this any thing more than a dream; or am I really destined to achieve such an enterprize? Destined!—and why is not this conviction of its excellence, this conscious duty of performing the noblest things that are possible, and this passionate ardor, enough to secure that I shall effect it? He feels indignant at that failing part

of his nature which puts him so far below his own conceptions, and below the examples which he is admiring; and this feeling assists him to resolve, that he will undertake this enterprize, that he certainly will, though the Alps or the Ocean lie between him and the object. Again his ardor slackens; distrustful of himself, he wishes to know how the design would appear to other minds; and when he speaks of it to his associates, one of them wonders, another laughs, and another frowns. His pride attempts, while with them, a manful defence; but his mind is gradually descending toward their level, he becomes ashamed to entertain a visionary project, which, therefore, like a rejected friend, desists from intruding on him or following him, and he subsides, at last, into what he labors to believe a man too rational for the schemes of ill-calculating enthusiasm. And it were strange if the effort to make out this favorable estimate of himself did not succeed, while it is so much more pleasant to attribute one's defect of enterprize to wisdom, which on maturer thought disapproves of it, than to imbecility which shrinks from it.

A person of undecisive character wonders how all the embarrassments in the world happened to meet exactly in *his* way, to place him just in that one situation for which he is peculiarly unadapted, and in which he is also willing to think no other man could have acted with much facility or confidence. Incapable of setting up a firm purpose on the basis of things as they are, he is often employed in vain speculations on some different supposable state of things, which would have saved him from all this perplexity and irresolution. He thinks what a determined course he could have pursued, *if* his talents, his health, his age, had been different; *if* he had been acquainted with some one person sooner; *if* his friends were in this or the other point, different from what they are: or if fortune had showered her favors on him. And he gives himself as much license to complain as if all these advantages had been among the rights of his nativity, but refused, by a malignant or capricious fate, to his life. Thus he is occupied, instead of catching with a vigilant eye, and seizing with a strong hand, all the possibilities of his actual situation.

A man without decision can never be said to belong to himself; since, if he dared to assert that he did, the puny force of some cause, about as powerful, you would have supposed, as a spider, may make a capture of the hapless boaster the very next moment, and triumphantly exhibit the futility of the determinations by which he was to have proved the independence of his understanding and his will. He belongs to whatever can seize him: and innumerable things



do actually verify their claim on him, and arrest him as he tries to go along; as twigs and chips, floating near the edge of a river, are intercepted by every weed, and whirled in every little eddy. Having concluded on a design, he may pledge himself to accomplish it, if the hundred diversities of feeling which may come within the week, will let him. As his character precludes all foresight of his conduct, he may sit and wonder what form and direction his views and actions are destined to take to-morrow; as a farmer has often to acknowledge the next day's proceedings are at the disposal of its winds and clouds.

This man's opinions and determinations always depend very much on other human beings; and what chance for consistency and stability, while the persons with whom he may converse, or transact, are so various? This very evening, he may talk with a man whose sentiments will melt away the present form and outline of his purposes, however firm and defined he may have fancied them to be. A succession of persons whose faculties were stronger than his own might, in spite of his irresolute reaction, take him and dispose of him as they pleased. An infirm character practically confesses itself made for subjection, and the man so constituted passes, like a slave, from owner to owner. Sometimes indeed it happens, that a person of this sort falls into the train, and under the permanent ascendancy, of some one stronger character, which thus becomes through life the oracle and guide, and gives the inferior a steady will and plan. This, when the leading character is virtuous, is a fortunate relief to the feeling, and an advantageous point gained to the utility, of the subordinate appended mind.

It is inevitable, that the regulation of every man's plan must greatly depend on the course of events, which come in an order not to be foreseen or prevented. But in accommodating the plans of conduct to the train of events, the difference between two men may be no less than that, in the one instance, the man is subservient to the events, and in the other, the events are made subservient to the man. Some men seem to have been taken along by a succession of events, and, as it were, handed forward in quiet passiveness from one to another; without any determined principle in their own characters, by which they could constrain those events to serve a design formed antecedently to them, or apparently in defiance of them. The events seized them as a neutral material, not they the events. Others, advancing through life with an internal invincible determination of mind, have seemed to make the train of circumstances, whatever they were, conduce as much to their chief design, as if they had taken place on purpose. It is wonderful how even the apparent casualties of life seem to bow

to a spirit that will not bow to them, and yield to assist a design, after having in vain attempted to frustrate it.

You may have seen such examples, though they are, comparatively, not numerous. You may have seen a man of this strong character in a state of indecision concerning some affair, in which it was requisite for him to determine, because it was requisite for him to act. But, in this case, his manner would assure you that he would not remain long undecided; you would wonder if you found him still at a loss the next day. If he explained his thoughts, you would perceive that their clear process, evidently at each effort approaching nearer to the result, must certainly reach it ere long. The deliberation of such a mind is a very different thing from the fluctuation of the other. To *know* how to obtain a determination, is one of the first symptoms of a rationally decisive character.

When the decision was formed, and the purpose fixed, you would feel an entire assurance that something would absolutely be done. It is characteristic of such a mind, to think for effect; and the pleasure of escaping from temporary doubt, gives an additional impulse to the force with which it is carried into action. Such a man will not re-examine his conclusions with endless repetition, and he will not be delayed long by consulting other persons, after he has ceased to consult himself. He cannot bear to sit still among unexecuted decisions, and unattempted projects. We wait to hear of his achievements, and are confident we shall not wait long. The possibility or the means may not be obvious to us, but we know that every thing will be attempted, and that such a mind is like a river, which, in whatever manner it is obstructed, will make its way somewhere. It must have cost Cæsar many anxious hours of deliberation, before he decided to pass the Rubicon; but it is probable he suffered but few to elapse after his decision, before he did pass it. And any one of his friends, who should have been apprized of this determination, and understood his character, would have smiled contemptuously to hear it insinuated that though Cæsar had resolved, Cæsar would not dare; or that, though he might cross the Rubicon, whose opposite bank presented to him no hostile legions, he might come to other rivers, which he would not cross; or that either rivers, or any other obstacle, would deter him from prosecuting the determination from this ominous commencement to its very last consequence.

One signal advantage possessed by a mind of this character is, that its passions are not wasted. The whole measure of passion of which any mind, with important transactions before it, is capable, is not more than enough to supply interest and energy to its practical exertions; and therefore as

little as possible of this sacred fire should be expended in a way that does not augment the force of action. But nothing can less contribute to vigor of action, than protracted anxious fluctuation, intermixed with resolutions decided and revoked, while yet nothing causes a greater expense of feeling. The heart is fretted and exhausted by being subjected to an alternation of contrary excitements, with the ultimate mortifying consciousness of their contributing to no end. The long-wavering deliberation, whether to perform some bold action of difficult virtue, has often cost more to feeling than the action itself, or a series of such actions, would have cost; with the great disadvantage, too, of being relieved by none of that invigoration, which, to the man in action, would have sprung from the spirit of the action itself, and have renovated the ardor which it was expending. A person of decisive character, by consuming as little passion as possible in dubious musings, and abortive resolutions, can secure its utmost value and use, by throwing it all into effective operation.

Another advantage of this character, is, that it exempts from a great deal of interference and persecution, to which an irresolute man is subjected. Weakness in every form, tempts arrogance; and a man may be allowed to wish for a kind of character with which stupidity and impertinence may not make so free. When a firm decisive spirit is recognized, it is curious to see how the space clears around a man, and leaves him room and freedom. The disposition to interrogate, dictate, or banter, preserves a respectful and politic distance, judging it not unwise to keep the peace with a person of so much energy. A conviction that he understands and that he wills with extraordinary force, silences the conceit that intended to perplex or instruct him, and intimidates the malice that was disposed to attack him. There is a feeling, as in respect to Fate, that the decrees of so inflexible a spirit *must* be right, or that, at least, they *will* be accomplished.

But not only will he secure the freedom of acting for himself, he will obtain also by degrees the coincidence of those in whose company he is to transact the business of life. If the manners of such a man are free from arrogance, and he can qualify his firmness with a moderate degree of insinuation; and if his measures have partly lost the appearance of being the dictates of his will, under the wider and softer sanction of some experience that they are reasonable; both competition and fear will be laid to sleep, and his will may acquire an unresisted ascendancy over many who will be pleased to fall into the mechanism of a system, which they find makes them more successful and happy than they could have been amidst

the anxiety of adjusting plans and expedients of their own, and the consequences of often adjusting them ill. I have known several parents, both fathers and mothers, whose management of their families has answered this description; and has displayed a striking example of the facile complacency with which a number of persons, of different ages and dispositions, will yield to the decisions of a firm mind, acting on an equitable and enlightened system.

The last resource of this character is, hard inflexible pertinacity, on which it may be allowed to rest its strength, after finding it can be effectual in none of its milder forms. I remember admiring an instance of this kind, in a firm, sagacious, and very estimable old man, whom I well knew, and who is now dead. Being on a jury, in a trial of life and death, he was completely satisfied of the innocence of the prisoner; the other eleven were of the opposite opinion. But he was resolved the man should not be condemned; and as the first effort for preventing it, very properly made application to the *minds* of his associates, spending several hours in laboring to convince them. But he found he made no impression, while he was exhausting the strength which was to be reserved for another mode of operation. He then calmly told them, it should now be a trial who could endure confinement and famine the longest, and that they might be quite assured he would sooner die than release them at the expense of the prisoner's life. In this situation, they spent about twenty-four hours; when, at length, all acceded to his verdict of acquittal.

It is not necessary to amplify on the indispensable importance of this quality, in order to the accomplishment of any thing eminently good. We instantly see that every path to signal excellence is so obstructed and beset, that none but a spirit so qualified can pass. But it is time to examine what are the elements which compose the character.

## LETTER II.

*Brief inquiry into the Constituents of this commanding Quality. Corporeal Constitution. Possibility, nevertheless, of a firm Mind in a feeble Body. Confidence in a Man's own Judgment. This is an uncommon Distinction. Picture of a Man who wants it. This Confidence distinguished from Obstinacy. Partly founded on Experience. Takes a high Tone of Independence in devising Schemes. Distressing Dilemmas.*

PERHAPS the best mode would be to bring into our thoughts, in succession, the most



remarkable examples of this character that we have known in real life, or that we have read of in history, or even in fiction, and attentively to observe, in their conversations, manners, and actions, what principles appear to produce, or to constitute this commanding distinction. You will easily pursue this investigation yourself. I lately made a partial attempt, and shall offer you a number of suggestions.

As a previous observation, it is beyond all doubt that very much depends on the constitution of the body. It would be for physiologists to explain, if it were explicable, the *manner* in which corporeal organization affects the mind; I only assume it as a fact, that there is, in the material construction of some persons, much more than of others, some quality which augments, if it does not create, both the stability of their resolution, and the energy of their active tendencies. There is something that, like the ligatures which one class of the Olympic combatants bound on their hands and wrists, braces round, if I may so describe it, and compresses the powers of the mind, giving them a steady forcible spring and re-action, which they would presently lose if they could be transferred into a constitution of soft, yielding, treacherous debility. The action of strong character seems to demand something firm in its corporeal basis, as massive engines require, for their weight and for their working, to be fixed on a solid foundation. Accordingly I believe it would be found, that a majority of the persons most remarkable for decisive character, have possessed great constitutional firmness. I do not mean an exemption from disease and pain, nor any certain measure of mechanical strength, but a tone of vigor, the opposite to lassitude, and adapted to great exertion and endurance. This is clearly evinced in respect to many of them, by the prodigious labors and deprivations which they have borne in prosecuting their designs. The physical nature has seemed a proudly of the moral one, and with a hardness that would never shrink, has sustained the energy that could never remit.

A view of the disparities between the different races of animals inferior to man, will show the effect of organization on disposition. Compare, for instance, a lion with the common beasts of our fields, many of them composed of a larger bulk of animated substance. What a vast superiority of courage impetuous movement, and determined action; and we attribute this difference to some great dissimilarity of modification in the composition of the animated material. Now it is probable that a difference somewhat analogous subsists between some human bodies and others, and that this is no small part of the cause of the striking in-

equalities in respect to decisive character. A very decisive man has probably more of the physical quality of a *lion* in his composition than other men.

It is observable that women in general have less inflexibility of character than men; and though many moral influences contribute to this difference, the principal cause may probably be something less firm in the corporeal texture. Now that physical quality, whatever it is, from the existence of a smaller measure of which in the constitution of the frame, women have less firmness than men, may be possessed by one man more than by men in general, in a greater degree of difference than that by which men in general exceed women.

If there have been found some resolute spirits powerfully asserting themselves in feeble vehicles, it is so much the better; since this would authorize a hope, that if all the other grand requisites can be combined, they may form a strong character, in spite of the counteraction of an unadapted constitution. And, on the other hand, no constitutional hardness will form the true character, without those grand principles; though it may produce that false and contemptible kind of decision which we term *obstinacy*; a stubbornness of temper, which can assign no reasons but mere will, for a constancy which acts in the nature of dead weight rather than of strength; resembling less the re-action of a powerful spring, than the gravitation of a big stone.

The first prominent mental characteristic of the person whom I describe is, a complete confidence in his own judgment. It will perhaps be said, that this is not so uncommon a qualification. I however think it is uncommon. It is indeed obvious enough, that almost all men have a flattering estimate of their own understanding, and that so long as this understanding has no harder task than to form opinions which are not to be tried in action, they have a most self-complacent assurance of being right. This assurance extends to the judgments which they pass on the proceedings of others. But let them be brought into the necessity of adopting actual measures in an untried proceeding, where, unassisted by any previous example or practice, they are reduced to depend on the resources of pure judgment alone, and you will see, in many cases, this confidence of opinion vanish away. The mind seems all at once placed in a misty vacuity, where it reaches round on all sides, but can find nothing to take hold of. Or if not lost in vacuity, it is overwhelmed by confusion; and feels as if its faculties were annihilated as soon as it begins to think of schemes and calculations among the possibilities, chances, and hazards, which overspread a wide, untrodden

field; and this conscious imbecility becomes severe distress, when it is believed that consequences, of serious or unknown good or evil, are depending on the decisions which are to be formed amidst so much uncertainty. The thought painfully recurs at each step and turn, I may be right, but it is more probable I am wrong. It is like the case of a rustic, walking in London, who, having no certain direction through the vast confusion of streets to the place where he wishes to be, advances, and hesitates, and turns, and inquires, and becomes, at each corner, still more inextricably perplexed.\* A man in this situation feels he shall be very unfortunate if he cannot accomplish more than he can understand. Is not this frequently, when brought to the practical test, the state of a mind not much disposed, in general, to undervalue its own judgment?

In cases where judgment is not so completely bewildered, you will yet perceive a great practical distrust of it. A man has perhaps advanced a considerable way towards a decision, but then lingers at a small distance from it, till necessity, with a stronger hand than conviction, impels him upon it. He cannot see the whole length of the question, and suspects the part beyond his sight to be the most important, because it is beyond. He fears that certain possible consequences, if they should follow, would cause him to reproach himself for his present determination. He wonders how this or the other person would have acted in the same circumstances; eagerly catches at any thing like a respectable precedent; and looks anxiously round to know what each person thinks on the subject; while the various and opposite opinions to which he listens, perhaps only serve to confound his perception of the track of thought by which he had hoped to reach his conclusion. Even when that conclusion is obtained, there are not many minds that might not be brought a few degrees back into dubious hesitation, by a man of respected understanding saying, in a confident tone, Your plan is injudicious; your selection is unfortunate; the event will disappoint you.

It cannot be supposed that I am maintaining such an absurdity as that a man's complete reliance on his own judgment is necessarily a proof of that judgment being correct and strong. Intense stupidity may be in this point the rival of clear-sighted wisdom. I had once some knowledge of a person, whom no mortal, not even

Cromwell, could have excelled in the article of confidence in his judgment, and consequent inflexibility of conduct; while at the same time his successive schemes were ill-judged to a degree that made his disappointments ridiculous rather than pitiable. He was not an example of that simple obstinacy which I have mentioned before; for he considered his measures, and did not want for reasons which satisfied himself beyond a doubt of their being most judicious. This confidence of opinion may be possessed by a person in whom it will be contemptible or mischievous; but its proper place is in a very different character, and without it there can be no dignified actors in human affairs.

If, after observing how foolish this confidence appears as a feature in a weak character, it be inquired what it is in a justly decisive person's manner of thinking, which authorizes him in this firm assurance that his view of the concerns before him is comprehensive and accurate; he may, in answer, justify his confidence upon such grounds as these: that he is conscious that objects are presented to his mind with an exceedingly distinct and perspicuous aspect, not like the shapes of moonlight, or like Ossian's ghosts, dim forms of uncircumscribed shade; that he sees the different parts of the subject in an arranged order, not in dispersed fragments; that in each deliberation the main object keeps its clear pre-eminence, and he perceives the bearings which the subordinate and conducive ones have on it; that perhaps several dissimilar trains of thought lead him to the same conclusion; and that he finds his judgment does not vary according to the moods of his feelings.

It may be presumed that a high degree of this character is not attained without a considerable measure of that kind of certainty, with respect to the relations of things, which can be acquired only from experience and observation; though an extreme vigilance in the exercise of observation, and a strong and strongly exerted power of generalizing on experience, may have made a comparatively short time enough to supply a large share of the wisdom derivable from these sources; so that a man may be rich in the benefits of experience, and therefore may have all the decision of judgment legitimately founded on that accomplishment, long before he is old. This experimental knowledge he will be able to apply in a direct and immediate manner, and without refining it into general principles, to some situations of affairs, so as to anticipate the consequences of certain actions in those situations as confidently and rationally as the kind of fruit to be produced by a given kind of tree. Thus far the facts

\* "Why does not the man call a hackney-coach?" a gay reader, I am aware, will say of a person so benighted in a great town. So he might, certainly; and the gay reader and I have only to deplore that there is no parallel convenience for the assistance of perplexed understandings.



of his experience will serve him as precedents. At the next step, he will be able to apply this knowledge, now converted into general principles, to a multitude of cases bearing but a partial resemblance to any thing he has actually witnessed. And then, in looking forward to the possible occurrence of altogether new combinations of circumstances, he can trust to the resources which he is persuaded his intellect will open to him, or is humbly confident, if he is a devout man, that the Supreme Intelligence will not suffer to be wanting to him, when the occasion arrives. In proportion as his views include, at all events, more certainties than those of other men, he is less fearful of contingencies. And if, in the course of executing his design, unexpected disastrous events should befall, but which are not owing to any thing wrong in the plan and principles of that design, but to foreign causes; it will be characteristic of a strong mind to attribute these events discriminately to their own causes, and not to the *plan*, which, therefore, instead of being disliked and relinquished, will be still as much approved as before, and the man will proceed calmly to the sequel of it without any change of arrangement; unless indeed these sinister events should be such as to alter the whole state of things to which the plan was correctly adapted, and so to create a necessity on this account for an entirely new one to be formed.

Without absolutely despising the understandings of other men, he will perceive their dimensions compared with his own, which will preserve its independence through every communication and encounter. It is however a part of this very independence, that he will hold himself at liberty to alter his opinion, if the information which may be communicated to him, shall give sufficient reason. And as no one is so sensible of the importance of a complete acquaintance with a subject as the man who is always endeavoring to think conclusively, he will listen with the utmost attention to the *information*, which may be received sometimes from persons for whose *judgment* he has no great respect. The information which they may afford to him is not all the less valuable for the circumstance, that his practical inferences from it may be quite different from theirs. Counsel will in general have only so much weight with him as it supplies knowledge which may assist his judgment; he will yield nothing to it as authority; but he may hear it with more candor and good temper, from being conscious of this independence of his judgment, than the man who is afraid lest the first person that begins to persuade him, should confound his determination. He feels it entirely a work of his own to delibe-

rate and to resolve, amidst all the advice which may be attempting to control him. If, with an assurance of his intellect being of the highest order, he also holds a commanding station, he will feel it gratuitous to consult with any one, excepting merely to receive statements of facts. This appears to be exemplified in the man, who has lately shown the nations of Europe how large a portion of the world may, when Heaven permits, be at the mercy of the solitary workings of an individual mind.

The strongest trial of this determined style of judgment is in those cases of urgency where something must immediately be done, and where the consequences of deciding right or wrong are of great importance; as in the office of a medical man in treating a patient whose situation, while it renders some hazardous means indispensable, also renders it extremely doubtful which ought to be selected. A still stronger illustration is the case of a general, who is compelled, in the very instant, to make dispositions on which the event of a battle, the lives of thousands of his men, or perhaps almost the fate of a nation may depend. He may even be reduced to an alternative which appears equally dreadful on both sides. Such a dilemma is described in Denon's account of one of the sanguinary conflicts between the French and the Mamelukes, as having for a while held General Desaix, though a very decisive commander, in a state of anguish.

### LETTER III.

*Energy of Feeling as necessary as Confidence of Opinion. Conduct that results from their combination. Effect and Value of a Ruling Passion. Great Decision of Character invests even wicked Beings with something which we are tempted to admire. Satan. Zanga. A Spanish Assassin. Remarkable Example of this Quality in a man who was a Prodigal and became poor, but turned Miser and became rich. Howard. Whitefield. Christian Missionaries.*

This indispensable basis, confidence of opinion, is however, not enough to constitute the character in question. For many persons, who have been conscious and proud of a much stronger grasp of thought than ordinary men, and have held the most decided opinions on important things to be done, have yet exhibited, in the listlessness or inconstancy of their actions, a contrast and a disgrace to the operations of their understandings. For want of some cogent feeling impelling them to carry every inter-

nal decision into action, they have been still left where they were; and a dignified judgment has been seen in the hapless plight of having no effective forces to execute its decrees.

It is evident then, (and I perceive I have partly anticipated this article in the first letter,) that another essential principle of the character is, a total incapability of surrendering to indifference or delay the serious determinations of the mind. A strenuous *will* must accompany the conclusions of thought, and constantly incite the utmost efforts for their practical accomplishment. The intellect must be invested, if I may so describe it, with a glowing atmosphere of passion, under the influence of which, the cold dictates of reason take fire, and spring into active powers.

Revert once more in your thoughts to the persons most remarkably distinguished by this decision. You will perceive, that instead of allowing themselves to sit down delighted after the labor of successful thinking, as if they had completed some great thing, they regard this labor but as a circumstance of preparation, and the conclusions resulting from it as of no more value, till applied to the greater labor which is to follow, than the entombed lamps of the Rosicrucians. They are not disposed to be content in a region of mere ideas, while they ought to be advancing into the field of corresponding realities; they retire to that region sometimes, as ambitious adventurers anciently went to Delphi, to consult, but not to reside. You will therefore find them almost uniformly in determined pursuit of some object, on which they fix a keen and steady look, and which they never lose sight of, while they follow it through the confused multitude of other things.

A person actuated by such a spirit, seems by his manner to say, Do you think that I would not disdain to adopt a purpose which I would not devote my utmost force to effect; or that having thus devoted my exertions, I will intermit or withdraw them, through indolence, debility, or caprice; or that I will surrender my object to any interference except the uncontrollable dispensations of Providence? No, I am linked to my determination with iron bands; it clings to me with the tenacity of my fate, of the accomplishment of which, the frustration of my purpose may indeed be doomed as a part, but is doomed so only through calamity or death.

This display of systematic energy seems to indicate a constitution of mind in which the passions are commensurate with the intellectual part, and at the same time hold an inseparable correspondence with it, like the faithful sympathy of the tides with the phases of the moon. There is such an

equality and connection, that subjects of the decisions of judgment become proportionably and of course the objects of passion. When the judgment decides with a very strong preference, that same strength of preference, actuating also the passions, devotes them with energy to the object, so long as it is thus approved; and this will produce such a conduct as I have described. When therefore a firm, self-confiding, and unaltering judgment fails to make a decisive character, it is evident either that the passions in that mind are too languid to be capable of a strong and unremitting excitement, which defects make an indolent or irresolute man; or that they perversely sometimes coincide with judgment and sometimes clash with it, which makes an inconsistent or versatile man.

There is no man so irresolute as not to act with determination in many single cases, where the motive is powerful and simple, and where there is no need of plan and perseverance; but this gives no claim to the term *character*, which expresses the habitual tenor of a man's active being. The character may be displayed in the successive unconnected undertakings, which are each of limited extent, and end with the attainment of their particular objects. But it is seen to the greatest advantage in those grand schemes of action, which have no necessary point of conclusion, which continue on through successive years, and extend even to that dark period when the agent himself is withdrawn from human sight.

I have repeatedly remarked to you, in conversation, the effect of what has been called a Ruling Passion. When its object is noble, and an enlightened understanding directs its movements, it appears to me a great felicity; but whether its object be noble or not, it infallibly creates, where it exists in great force, that active, ardent constancy, which I describe as a capital feature of the decisive character. The Subject of such a commanding passion wonders, if indeed he were at leisure to wonder, at the persons who pretend to attach importance to an object which they make none but the most languid efforts to secure. The utmost powers of the man are constrained into the service of the favorite Cause by this passion, which sweeps away, as it advances, all the trivial objections and little opposing motives, and seems almost to open a way through impossibilities. This spirit comes on him in the morning as soon as he recovers his consciousness, and commands and impels him through the day, with a power from which he could not emancipate himself if he would. When the force of habit is added, the determination becomes invincible, and seems to as-



sume rank with the great laws of nature, making it nearly as certain that such a man will persist in his course as that in the morning the sun will rise.

A persisting, untameable efficacy of soul gives a seductive and pernicious dignity even to a character and a course which every moral principle forbids us to approve. Often in the narrations of history and fiction, an agent of the most dreadful designs compels a sentiment of deep respect for the unconquerable mind displayed in their execution. While we shudder at his activity, we say with regret, mingled with an admiration which borders on partiality, What a noble being this would have been, if goodness had been his destiny! The partiality is evinced in the very selection of terms, by which we show that we are tempted to refer his atrocity rather to his destiny than to his choice. I wonder whether an emotion like this, has not been experienced by each reader of *Paradise Lost*, relative to the Leader of the infernal spirits; a proof, if such were the fact, that a very serious error has been committed by the greatest poet. In some of the high examples of ambition, we almost revere the force of mind which impelled them forward through the longest series of action, superior to doubt and fluctuation, and disdainful of ease, of pleasures, of opposition, and of danger. We bow to the ambitious spirit which reached the true sublime in the reply of Pompey to his friends, who dissuaded him from hazarding his life on a tempestuous sea in order to be at Rome on an important occasion: "It is necessary for me to go; it is not necessary for me to live."

Revenge has produced wonderful examples of this unremitting constancy to a purpose. Zanga is a well-supported illustration. And you may have read a real instance of a Spaniard, who, being injured by another inhabitant of the same town, resolved to destroy him: the other was apprised of this, and removed with the utmost secrecy, as he thought, to another town at a considerable distance, where however he had not been more than a day or two, before he found that his enemy was arrived there. He removed in the same manner to several parts of the kingdom, remote from each other; but in every place quickly perceived that his deadly pursuer was near him. At last he went to South America, where he had enjoyed his security but a very short time, before his unrelenting enemy came up with him, and accomplished his purpose.

You may recollect the mention, in one of our conversations, of a young man who wasted in two or three years, a large patrimony in profligate revels with a number of worthless associates who called them-

selves his friends, and who, when his last means were exhausted, treated him of course with neglect or contempt. Reduced to absolute want, he one day went out of the house with an intention to put an end to his life; but wandering a while almost unconsciously, he came to the brow of an eminence which overlooked what were lately his estates. Here he sat down, and remained fixed in thought a number of hours, at the end of which he sprang from the ground with a vehement, exulting emotion. He had formed his resolution, which was, that all these estates should be his again; he had formed his plan too, which he instantly began to execute. He walked hastily forward, determined to seize the very first opportunity, of however humble a kind, to gain any money, though it were ever so despicable a trifle, and resolved absolutely not to spend, if he could help it a farthing of whatever he might obtain. The first thing that drew his attention was a heap of coals shot out of carts on the pavement before a house. He offered himself to shovel or wheel them into the place where they were to be laid, and was employed. He received a few pence for the labor; and then, in pursuance of the saving part of his plan, requested some small gratuity of meat and drink, which was given him. He then looked out for the next thing that might chance to offer; and went, with indefatigable industry, through a succession of servile employments, in different places, of longer and shorter duration, still scrupulously avoiding, as far as possible, the expense of a penny. He promptly seized every opportunity which could advance his design, without regarding the meanness of occupation or appearance. By this method he had gained after a considerable time, money enough to purchase in order to sell again a few cattle, of which he had taken pains to understand the value. He speedily but cautiously turned his first gains into second advantages; retained without a single deviation his extreme parsimony; and thus advanced by degrees into larger transactions and incipient wealth. I did not hear, or have forgotten, the continued course of his life; but the final result was, that he more than recovered his lost possessions, and died an inveterate miser, worth sixty thousand pounds. I have always recollected this as a signal instance, though in an unfortunate and ignoble direction, of decisive character, and of the extraordinary effect, which according to general laws, belongs to the strongest form of such a character.

But not less decision has been displayed by men of virtue. In this distinction no man ever exceeded, for instance, or ever will exceed, the late illustrious Howard.

The energy of his determination was so great, that it, instead of being habitual, it had been shown only for a short time on particular occasions, it would have appeared a vehement impetuosity; but by being unintermitted, it had an equability of manner which scarcely appeared to exceed the tone of a calm constancy, it was so totally the reverse of any thing like turbulence or agitation. It was the calmness of an intensity kept uniform by the nature of the human mind forbidding it to be more, and by the character of the individual forbidding it to be less. The habitual passion of the mind was a measure of feeling almost equal to the temporary extremes and paroxysms of common minds: as a great river, in its customary state, is equal to a small or moderate one when swollen to a torrent.

The moment of finishing his plans in deliberation, and commencing them in action was the same. I wonder what must have been the amount of that bribe, in emolument or pleasure, that would have detained him a week inactive after their final adjustment. The law which carries water down a declivity, was not more unconquerable and invariable than the determination of his feelings towards the main object. The importance of this object held his faculties in a state of excitement which was too rigid to be effected by lighter interests, and on which therefore the beauties of nature and of art had no power. He had no leisure feeling which he could spare to be diverted among the innumerable varieties of the extensive scene which he traversed; all his subordinate feelings lost their separate existence and operation, by falling into the grand one. There have not been wanting trivial minds, to mark this as a fault in his character. But the mere men of taste ought to be silent respecting such a man as Howard; he is above their sphere of judgment. The invisible spirits, who fulfil their commission of philanthropy among mortals, do not care about pictures, statues, and sumptuous buildings; and no more did he, when the time in which he must have inspected and admired them, would have been taken from the work to which he had consecrated his life. The curiosity which he might feel, was reduced to wait till the hour should arrive, when its gratification should be presented by conscience, which kept a scrupulous charge of all his time, as the most sacred duty of that hour. If he was still at every hour, when it came, fated to feel the attractions of the fine arts but

the second claim, they might be sure of their revenge; for no other man will ever visit Rome under such a despotic consciousness of duty, as to refuse himself time for surveying the magnificence of its ruins. Such a sin against taste is very far beyond the reach of common saintship to commit. It implied an inconceivable severity of conviction, that he had *one thing to do*, and that he who would do some great thing in this short life, must apply himself to the work with such a concentration of his forces, as, to idle spectators who live only to amuse themselves, looks like insanity.

His attention was so strongly and tenaciously fixed on his object, that even at the greatest distance, as the Egyptian pyramids to travellers, it appeared to him with a luminous distinctness as if it had been nigh, and beguiled the toilsome length of labor and enterprise by which he was to reach it. It was so conspicuous before him, that not a step deviated from the direction, and every movement and every day was an approximation. As his method referred every thing he did and thought to the end, and as his exertion did not relax for a moment, he made the trial, so seldom made, what is the utmost effect which may be granted to the last possible efforts of a human agent: and therefore what he did not accomplish, he might conclude to be placed beyond the sphere of moral activity, and calmly leave to the immediate disposal of Providence.

Unless the eternal happiness of mankind be an insignificant concern, and the passion to promote it an inglorious distinction, I may cite George Whitefield as a noble instance of this attribute of the decisive character, this intense necessity of action. The great Cause which was so languid a thing in the hands of many of its advocates, assumed in his administrations an unmitigable urgency.

Many of the Christian missionaries among the heathens, such as Brainerd, Elliot, and Schwartz, have displayed memorable examples of this dedication of their whole being to their office, this abjuration of all the quiescent feelings.

This would be the proper place for introducing (if I did not hesitate to introduce in any connection with merely human instances) the example of him who said, "I must be about my Father's business. My meat and drink is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished."



## LETTER IV.

*Courage a chief Constituent of the Character. Effect of this in encountering Censure and Ridicule. Almagro. Pizarro, and De Luques. Defiance of Danger. Luther. Daniel. Another indispensable Requisite to Decision is the full Agreement of all the Powers of the Mind. Lady Macbeth. Richard III. Cromwell. A Father who had the opportunity of saving one of two Sons from Death.*

AFTER the illustration on the last article, it will seem but a very slight transition when I proceed to specify Courage, as an essential part of the decisive character. An intelligent man, adventurous only in thought, may sketch the most excellent scheme, and after duly admiring it, and himself as its author, may be reduced to say, What a noble spirit that would be which should dare to realize this! A noble spirit! is it I? And his heart may answer in the negative, while he glances a mortified thought of inquiry round to recollect persons who would venture what he dares not, and almost hopes not to find them. Or if by extreme effort he has brought himself to a resolution of braving the difficulty, he is compelled to execrate the timid lingerings that still keep him back from the trial. A man endowed with the complete character, might say, with a sober consciousness as remote from the spirit of bravado as it is from timidity, Thus, and thus, is my conviction and my determination; now for the phantoms of fear; let me look them in the face; they will find I am not made of trembling materials: "I dare do all that may become a man. I shall firmly confront every thing that threatens me in the prosecuting of my purpose, and I am prepared to meet the consequences of it when it is accomplished. I should despise a being, though it were myself, whose agency could be held enslaved by the gloomy shapes of imagination, by the haunting recollections of a dream, by the whistling or the howling of winds, by the shriek of owls, by the shades of midnight, or by the threats or frowns of man. I should be indignant to feel that, in the commencement of an adventure, I could think of nothing but the deep pit by the side of the way where I must walk, into which I may slide, the mad animal which it is not impossible that I may meet, or the assassin who may lurk in a thicket of yonder wood. And I disdain to compromise the interests that rouse me to action, for the privilege of a disgraceful security.

As the conduct of a decisive man is always individual, and often singular, he may expect some serious trials of courage. For

one thing he may be encountered by the strongest disapprobation of many of his connections, and the censure of the greater part of the society where he is known. In this case, it is not a man of common spirit that can show himself just as at other times, and meet their anger in the same undisturbed manner as he would meet some ordinary inclemency of the weather; that can, without harshness or violence, continue to effect every moment some part of his design coolly replying to each ungracious look and indignant voice, I am sorry to oppose you: I am not unfriendly to you, while thus persisting in what excite your displeasure; it would please me to have your approbation and concurrence, and I think I should have them if you would seriously consider my reasons; but meanwhile, I am superior to opinion, I am not to be intimidated by reproaches, nor would your favor and applause be any reward for the sacrifice of my object. As you can do without my approbation, I can certainly do without yours; it is enough that I can approve myself, it is enough that I can appeal to the last authority in the creation. Amuse yourselves, as you may, by continuing to censure or to rail; I must continue to act.

The attack of contempt and ridicule is perhaps a still greater trial of courage. It is felt by all to be an admirable thing, when it can in no degree be ascribed to the hardness of either stupidity or confirmed depravity, to sustain for a considerable time, or in numerous instances, the looks of scorn, or an unrestrained shower of taunts and jeers, with a perfect composure, which shall immediately after, or even at the time, proceed on the business that provokes all this ridicule. This invincibility of temper will often make even the scoffers themselves tired of the sport; they begin to feel that against such a man it is a poor sort of hostility to laugh. There is nothing that people are more mortified to spend in vain than their scorn. Till, however, a man becomes a veteran, he must reckon on sometimes meeting this trial; and I instantly know, if I hear him anxiously reply, to an important suggestion of any measure to be adopted, But will they not laugh at me? I know that he is not the person whom this essay attempts to describe. A man of the right kind would say, They will smile, they will laugh, will they? Much good may it do them. I have something else to do than to trouble myself about their mirth. I do not care if the whole neighborhood were to laugh in a chorus. I should indeed be sorry to see or hear such a number of fools, but pleased enough to find that they did not consider me as one of their stamp. The good to result from my project will not be less, because vain and shallow minds

that cannot understand it, are diverted at it and at me. What should I think of my pursuits, if every trivial, thoughtless being could comprehend or would applaud them; and of myself, if my courage needed levity and ignorance for their allies, or could shrink at their sneers?

I remember, that on reading the account of the project of conquering Peru, formed by Almagro, Pizarro, and De Luques, while abhorring the principle and the design of the men, I could not help admiring the hardihood of mind, which made them regardless of scorn. These three individuals, before they had obtained any associates, or arms, or soldiers, or a complete knowledge of the power of the kingdom they were to conquer, celebrated a solemn mass in one of the great churches, as a pledge and a commencement of the enterprise, amidst the astonishment and contempt expressed by a multitude of people for what was deemed a monstrous project. They however proceeded through the service, and afterwards to their respective departments of preparation, with an apparently entire insensibility to all this triumphant scorn; and thus gave the first proof of possessing that invincible firmness with which they afterwards prosecuted their design, till they attained a success, the destructive process and many of the results of which humanity will forever deplore.

Milton's Abdiel is a noble illustration of the courage that defies scorn.

But in some of the situations where decision of character is to be evinced, a man will be threatened by evils of a darker aspect than disapprobation or contempt. He may apprehend serious sufferings; and very often, to dare as far as conscience or a great cause required, has been to dare to die. In almost all plans of great enterprise, a man must systematically dismiss, at the entrance, every wish to stipulate for safety with his destiny. He voluntarily treads within the precincts of danger; and though it is possible that he may escape, he ought to be prepared with the fortitude of a self-devoted victim. This is the inevitable condition on which heroes, travellers or missionaries among savage nations, and reformers on a grand scale, must commence their career. Either they must allay their fire of enterprise, or they must hold themselves in readiness to be exploded by it from the world.

The last decisive energy of a rational courage, which confides in the Supreme Power, is very sublime. It makes a man, who intrepidly dares every thing that can oppose or attack him within the whole sphere of mortality; who would retain his purpose unshaken amidst the ruins of the

world; who will still press toward his object while death is impending over him.

It was in the true elevation of this character that Luther, when cited to appear at the Diet of Worms, under a very questionable assurance of safety from high authority, said to his friends, who conjured him not to go, and justly brought the example of John Huss, who, in a similar situation, and with the same pledge of protection, had notwithstanding been burnt alive, "I am called in the name of God to go, and I would go, though I were certain to meet as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the houses."

A reader of the Bible will not forget Daniel, braving in calm devotion the decree which virtually consigned him to the den of lions; Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, saying to the tyrant, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter," when the furnace was in sight.

The combination of these several essential principles constitutes that state of mind which is the grand requisite to decision of character, and perhaps its most striking distinction, that is, the full agreement of the mind with itself, the co-operation of all its powers and all its dispositions.

What an unfortunate task it would be for a charioteer, who had harnessed a set of horses however strong, if he could not make them draw together; if, while one of them would go forward, another was restive, another struggled backward, another started aside. If even one of the four were unmanageably perverse, while the three were obedient, an aged beggar with his crutch might leave Phaeton behind. So in a human being, unless the chief forces act consentaneously, there can be no inflexible vigor, either of will or of execution. One dissentient principle in the mind not only deducts so much from the strength and mass of its agency, but counteracts and embarrasses all the rest. If the judgment holds in low estimation that which yet the passions incline a man to pursue, his pursuit will be irregular and inconstant, though it may have occasional fits of animation, when those passions happen to be highly stimulated. If there is an opposition between judgment and habit, though the man will probably continue to act mainly under the direction of habit in spite of his opinions, yet sometimes the intrusion of those opinions will have for the moment an effect like that of Prospero's wand on the limbs of Ferdinand; and to be alternately impelled by habit, and checked by opinion, will be a state of vexatious debility. If two principal passions are opposite to each other, they will utterly distract any mind, whatever might be the force of its faculties, when acting without embarrassment. The



one passion may be somewhat stronger than the other, and therefore just prevail barely enough to give a feeble impulse to the conduct of the man; but no powerful impulse can be given; till the disparity of these two rivals becomes greater, in consequence of the gradual weight of habit, or the reinforcement supplied by some new impressions, being added to the preponderating passion. The disparity must be no less than an absolute predominance of the one and subjection of the other, before the prevailing passion will have at liberty from the intestine conflict any large measure of its force to throw activity into the system of conduct. If, for instance, a man feels at once the love of fame which is to be gained only by arduous exertions, and an equal degree of the love of pleasure which precludes those exertions; if he is eager to show off in splendor, and yet anxious to save money; if he has the curiosity of adventure, and yet that solicitude for his safety, which forbids him to climb a precipice, descend into a cavern, or explore a dangerous wild; if he has the stern will of a tyrant, and yet the relentings of a man; if he has the ambition which would subdue his fellow-mortals, counteracted by the humanity which would not hurt them; we can easily anticipate the irresolute, contradictory tenor of his actions. Especially if conscience, that great troubler of the human breast, loudly declares against a man's wishes or projects, it will be a fatal enemy to decision, till it either reclaim the delinquent passions, or be debauched or murdered by them.

Lady Macbeth may be cited as a harmonious character, though the epithet seems strangely applied. She had capacity, ambition, and courage; and she willed the death of the king. Macbeth had still more capacity, ambition, and courage; and he also willed the murder of the king. But he had, besides, humanity, generosity, conscience, and some measure of what forms the *power* of conscience, the fear of a Superior Being. Consequently, when the dreadful moment approached, he felt an insupportable conflict between these opposite principles, and when it was arrived, his utmost courage began to fail. The worse part of his nature fell prostrate under the power of the better; the angel of goodness arrested the demon that grasped the dagger; and would have taken the dagger away, if the pure demonic firmness of his wife, who had none of these counteracting principles, had not shamed, and hardened him to the deed.

The poets delineation of Richard III, gives a dreadful specimen of this indivisibility of mental impulse. After his determination was fixed, his whole mind, with the compactest fidelity supported him in pro-

secuting it. Securely privileged from all interference of doubt that could linger, or humanity that could soften, or timidity that could shrink, he advanced with a grim, concentrated constancy through scene after scene of atrocity, still fulfilling his vow to "cut his way through with a bloody axe." He did not waver while he pursued his object, nor relent when he seized it.

Cromwell, (whom I mention as a parallel, not to Richard's depravity, but to his inflexible vigor,) lost his mental consistency in the latter end of a career distinguished by as much decision as the world ever saw. It appears that the wish to be a king, at last arose in a mind which had execrated royalty, and battled it from the land. As far as he really had any republican principles and partialities, this new desire must have been a very uncomplacent associate for them, and must have produced a schism in the breast where all the strong forces of thought and passion had acted till then in concord. The new form of ambition became just predominant enough to carry him, by slow degrees, through the embarrassment and the shame of this incongruity, into an irresolute determination to assume the crown; so irresolute, that he was reduced again to a mortifying indecision by the remonstrances of some of his friends, which he could have slighted, and by an apprehension of the public disapprobation, which he could have braved, if some of the principles of his own mind had not shrunk or revolted from the design. When at last the motives for relinquishing this design prevailed, it was by so small a degree of preponderance, that his reluctant refusal of the offered crown was the voice only of half his soul.

Not only two distinct counteracting passions, but one passion interested for two objects, both equally desirable, but of which the one must be sacrificed, may annihilate in that instance the possibility of determined conduct. I recollect reading in an old divine, a story from an older historian, applicable to this remark. A father went to the agents of a tyrant, to endeavor to redeem his two sons, military men, who with some other captives of war were condemned to die. He offered, as a ransom, to surrender his own life and a large sum of money. The tyrant's agents who had them in charge, informed him that this equivalent would be accepted for one of his sons, and for one only, because they should be accountable for the execution of two persons; he might therefore choose which he would redeem. Anxious to save even one of them thus at the expense of his own life, he yet was unable to decide which should die, by choosing the other to live, and remained in the agony of this dilemma

so long that they were both irreversibly ordered for execution.

### LETTER V.

*Formidable Power of Mischief which this high Quality gives to bad Men. Care required to prevent its rendering good Men unconciliating and overbearing. Independence and overruling Manner in Consultation. Lord Chatham. Decision of Character not incompatible with Sensibility and mild Manners. But probably the Majority of the most eminent Examples of it deficient in the kinder Affections. King of Prussia. Situations in which it may be an absolute Duty to act in Opposition to the Promptings of those Affections.*

It were absurd to suppose that any human being can attain a state of mind capable of acting in all instances invariably with the full power of determination; but it is obvious that many have possessed a habitual and very commanding measure of it; and I think the preceding remarks have taken account of its chief characteristics and constituent principles. A number of additional observations remain.

The slightest view of human affairs shows what fatal and ample mischief may be caused by men of this character, when misled or wicked. You have but to recollect the conquerors, despots, bigots, unjust conspirators, and signal villains of every class, who have blasted society by the relentless vigor which could act consistently and heroically wrong. Till therefore the virtue of mankind be greater, there is reason to be pleased that so few of them are endowed with extraordinary decision.

When this character is dignified by wisdom and principle, great care is yet required in the possessors of it to prevent it from becoming unamiable. As it involves much practical assertion of superiority over other human beings, the manner ought to be as mild and conciliating as possible; else pride will feel provoked, affection hurt, and weakness oppressed. But this manner is not the one which will be most natural to such a man; rather it will be that of sternness, reserve, and incomppliance. He will have the appearance of keeping himself always at a distance from social equality; and his friends will feel as if their friendship were continually sliding into subserviency; while his intimate connections will think he does not attach the due importance either to their opinions or to their regard. His manner, when they differ from him, or complain, will be in danger of giving the impression

of careless inattention, and sometimes of disdain.

When he can accomplish a design in his own person alone, he may separate himself to the work with the cold, self-inclosed individuality on which no one has any hold, which seems to recognise no kindred being in the world, which takes little account of good wishes and kind concern, any more than it cares for opposition; which seeks neither aid nor sympathy, and which seems to say, I do not want any of you, and I am glad that I do not; leave me alone to succeed or die. This has a very repellant effect on the friends who wished to feel themselves of some importance, in some way or other, to a person whom they are constrained to respect. When assistance is indispensable to his undertakings, his mode of signifying it will seem rather to command the co-operation, than to invite it.

In consultation, his manner will indicate that when he is equally with the rest in possession of the circumstances of the case, he does not at all expect to hear any opinions that shall correct his own; but is satisfied that either his present conception of the subject is the just one, or that his own mind must originate that which shall be so. This striking difference will be apparent between him and his associates, that *their* manner of receiving *his* opinions is that of agreement or dissent; *his* manner of receiving *theirs* is that of sanction or rejection. He has the tone of authoritatively deciding on what they say, but never of submitting to decision of what himself says. Their coincidence with his views does not give him a firmer assurance of his being right, nor their dissent any other impression than that of their incapacity to judge. If his feeling took the distinct form of a reflection, it would be, Mine is the business of comprehending and devising, and I am here to rule this company, and not to consult them; I want their docility and not their arguments; I am come, not to seek their co-operation in thinking, but to determine their concurrence in executing what is already thought for them. Of course, many suggestions and reasons which appear important to those from whom they come, will be disposed of by him with a transient attention, or a light facility, that will seem very disrespectful to persons who possibly hesitate to admit that he is a demi-god, and that they are but idiots. Lord Chatham, in going out of the House of Commons, just as one of the speakers against him concluded his speech by emphatically urging what he perhaps rightly thought the unanswerable question, "Where can we find means to support such a war?" turned round a moment, and gaily replied, "Gentle shepherd, tell me where."

Even the assenting convictions, and prac-



tical compliances, yielded by degrees to this decisive man, may be somewhat undervalued, as they will appear to him no more than simply coming, and that perhaps very slowly, to a right apprehension; whereas himself understood and decided justly from the first, and has been right all this while.

He will be in danger of extending but little tolerance to the prejudices, hesitation, and timidity, of those with whom he has to act. He will say to himself, I wish there were any thing like manhood among the beings called men; and that they could have the sense and spirit not to let themselves be hampered by so many silly notions and childish fears. Why cannot they either determine with some promptitude, or let me, that can, do it for them? Am I to wait till debility become strong, and folly wise? If full scope be allowed to these tendencies, they will make even a man of elevated virtue a tyrant, who, in the consciousness of the right intention, and the assurance of the wise contrivance, of his designs, will hold himself justified in being regardless of every thing but the accomplishment of them. He will forget all respect for the feelings and liberties of beings who are to be regarded as but a subordinate machinery, to be actuated, or to be thrown aside when not actuated, by the spring of his commanding spirit.

I have before asserted that this strong character may be exhibited with a mildness of manner, and that generally, it will thus best secure its efficacy. But this mildness must often be at the cost of great effort; and how much considerate policy or benevolent forbearance it will require, for a man to exert his utmost vigor in the very task, as it will appear to him at the time, of cramping that vigor! Lysurgus appears to have been a high example of mild patience in the firm prosecution of designs which were to be effected among a perverse multitude.

It is probable that the men most distinguished for decision, have not, in general, possessed a large share of tenderness; and it is easy to imagine that the laws of our nature will with great difficulty allow the combination of the refined sensibilities with a hardy, never-shrinking, never-yielding constancy. Is it not almost of the essence of this constancy to be free from even the *perception* of such impressions as cause a mind, weak through susceptibility, to relax or waver; just as the skin of the elephant, or the armor of the rhinoceros, would be but indistinctly sensible to the application of a force by which a small animal, with a skin of thin and delicate texture, would be pierced or lacerated to death? No doubt, this firmness consists partly in overcoming feelings, but it may consist partly too in not

having them. To be tremblingly alive to gentle impressions, and yet to be able to preserve, when the prosecution of a design requires it, an immoveable heart, amidst the most imperious causes of subduing emotion, is perhaps not an impossible constitution of mind, but it must be the rarest endowment of humanity.

If you take a view of the first rank of decisive men, you will observe that their faculties have been too much bent to arduous effort, their souls have been kept in too military an attitude, they have been begirt with too much iron, for the melting movements of the heart. Their whole being appears too much arrogated and occupied by the spirit of severe design, compelling them to work systematically toward some defined end, to be sufficiently at ease for the indolent complacency, the soft lassitude, of gentle affections, which love to surrender themselves to the present felicities, forgetful of all "enterprises of great pith and moment." The man seems rigorously intent still on his own affairs, as he walks, or regales, or mingles with domestic society; and appears to despise all the feelings that will not take rank with the grave labors and decisions of intellect, or coalesce with the unremitting passion which is his spring of action: he values not feelings which he cannot employ either as weapons or as engines. He loves to be actuated by a passion so strong as to compel into exercise the utmost force of his being, and fix him in a tone, compared with which, the gentle affections, if he had felt them, would be accounted tameness, and their exciting causes, insipidity.

Yet we cannot willingly allow that tenderness is totally incompatible with the most impregnable inflexibility; nor can we help believing that such men as Timoleon, Alfred, and Gustavus Adolphus, must have been very fascinating domestic associates, whenever the urgency of their affairs would allow them to withdraw from the interests of statesmen and warriors, to indulge the affections of men: most fascinating, for, with a relative or friend who had any right perceptions, all the value of their stronger character would be recognized in the gentler one; the man whom nothing could subdue, would exalt the quality of the tenderness which softened him to recline.

But it were much easier to enumerate a long train of ancient and modern names of men, who have had the decision without the softness. Perhaps indeed they have yielded sometimes to some species of love, as a mode of amusing their passions for an interval, till greater engagements have summoned them into their proper element; when they have shown how little the sentiment ever belonged to the heart, by the ease

with which they could relinquish the temporary favorite. In other cases, where there have not been the selfish inducements, which this passion supplies, to the exhibition of something like softness, and where they have been left to the pure sympathies of humanity alone, no rock on the face of the earth could be harder.

The celebrated King of Prussia occurs to me, as a capital instance of the decisive character; and there occurs to me, at the same time, one of the anecdotes of his life.\* Intending to make, in the night, an important movement in his camp, which was in sight of the enemy, he gave orders that by eight o'clock all the lights in the camp should be put out, on pain of death. The moment that the time was past, he walked out himself to see whether all were dark. He found a light in the tent of a Captain Zieten, which he entered just as the officer was folding up a letter. Zieten knew him, and instantly fell on his knees to entreat his mercy. The King asked to whom he had been writing; he said it was a letter to his wife, which he had retained the candle these few minutes beyond the time in order to finish. The King coolly ordered him to rise, and write one line more which he should dictate. This line was to inform his wife, without any explanation, that by such an hour the next day, he should be a dead man. The letter was then sealed, and despatched as it had been intended; and, the next day, the Captain was executed. I say nothing of the justice of the punishment itself; but this cool barbarity to the affection both of the officer and his wife, was enough to brand the character indelibly. It proved how little the decisive hero and pretended philosopher was susceptible of such an affection, or capable of sympathizing with its pains.

At the same time, it is proper to observe, that the case may easily occur, in which a man *must* be resolute to act in a manner which may make him appear to want the finer feelings. He must do what he knows will cause pain to persons who will feel it severely. He may be obliged to resist affectionate wishes, expostulations, entreaties, and tears. Take this same instance. If the wife of Zieten had come to supplicate for him, not only the remission of the punishment of death, but an exemption

from any other severe punishment, which was perhaps justly due to the violation of such an order, on so important an occasion, it had then probably been the duty and the virtue of the commander to deny the most interesting suppliant, and to resist the most pathetic appeals which could have been made to his feelings.

## LETTER VI.

*Circumstances tending to consolidate this Character. Opposition. Desertion. Marius. Satan. Charles de Moor. Success has the same Tendency. Cesar. Habit of associating with Inferiors. Voluntary means of forming or confirming this Character. The Acquisition of perfect Knowledge in the Department in which we are to act. The cultivation of a connected and conclusive Manner of reasoning. The resolute commencement of Action, in a Manner to commit ourselves irretrievably. Ledyard. The choice of a dignified Order of Concerns. The Approbation of Conscience. Yet melancholy to consider how many of the most distinguished Possessors of the Quality have been wicked.*

VARIOUS assignable circumstances may contribute much to confirm the character in question. I shall just notice two or three.

And first, *opposition*. The passions which inspirit men to resistance, and sustain them in it, such as anger, indignation, and resentment, are evidently far stronger than those which have reference to friendly objects; and if any of these strong passions are frequently excited by opposition, they infuse a certain quality into the general temperament of the mind, which remains after the immediate excitement is past. They continually strengthen the principle of re-action; they put the mind in the habitual array of defence and self-assertion, and often give it the aspect and the posture of a gladiator, when there appears no confronting combatant. When these passions are felt by the man whom I describe, it is probable that each excitement is followed by a greater increase of this principle of re-action than in other men, because this result is so congenial with his naturally resolute disposition. Let him be opposed then, through the whole course of an extended design, or in the general tenor of his actions; and this constant opposition would render him the service of an ally by corroborating his inflexibility. An irresolute mind indeed might be quelled, and subjugated by a formidable kind of opposition; but the strong wind which blows out a ta-

\* The authenticity of this anecdote, which I read in some trifling fugitive publication many years since, has been questioned. Possibly enough it might be one of the many but half-true stories which could not fail to go abroad concerning a man who made, in his day, so great a figure. But as it does not at all misrepresent the general character of his mind, since there are many incontrovertible facts proving against him as great a degree of deliberate cruelty as this anecdote would charge on him, the want of means to prove this one fact does not seem to impose any necessity for omitting the illustration.



per, augments a powerful fire, if there is fuel enough, to an indefinite intensity.

I believe you will find in fact that many of the individuals most eminently decisive in conduct, have made their way through opposition and contest; in which they have acquired both a prompt acuteness of faculty, and an inflexibility of temper, which even strong minds could never have attained in the tame security of facile, friendly coincidence. Very often, however, it is granted, the firmness matured by such discipline is accompanied, in a man of virtue, with a Catoic severity, and in a mere man of the world, with an unhumanized, repulsive hardness.

*Desertion* is another cause which may conduce to consolidate this character. A kind, mutually reclining dependence, is certainly the happiest state of human beings; but this necessarily prevents the development of some great individual powers which would be forced into action by a state of desertion. I lately happened to notice, with some surprise, an ivy, which being presented from attaching itself to the rock beyond a certain point, had shot off into a bold, elastic stem, with an air of as much independence as any branch of oak in the vicinity. So a human being, thrown, whether by cruelty, justice, or accident, from all social support and kindness, if he has any vigor of spirit, and is not in the bodily debility of either childhood or age, will instantly begin to act for himself with a resolution which will appear like a new faculty. And the most absolute inflexibility is likely to characterize the resolution of an individual who is obliged to deliberate without consultation, and execute without assistance. He will disdain to concede to beings that have rejected him, or to forego a single particle of his designs or advantages, for the sake of the opinions or the will of all the world. Himself, his pursuits, and his interests, are emphatically his own. "The world is not his friend, nor the world's law," and therefore he becomes regardless of every thing but its power, of which his policy carefully takes the measure, in order to ascertain his own means of action and impunity, as set against the world's means of annoyance, prevention, and retaliation.

If this person has but little humanity or principle, he will become a misanthrope, or perhaps a villain, that will resemble a solitary wild beast of the night, which makes prey of every thing it can overpower, and cares for nothing but fire. If he is capable of grand conception and enterprise, he may, like Spartacus, make a daring attempt against the whole social order of the state where he has been oppressed. If he has great humanity and principle, he may become one of the noblest of mankind, and

display a generous virtue to which society had no claim, and which it is not worthy to reward, if it should at last become inclined. No, he will say, give your rewards to another; as it has been no part of my object to gain them, they are not necessary to my satisfaction. I have done good, without expecting your gratitude, and without caring for your approbation. If conscience and my Creator had not been more auspicious than you, none of these virtues would ever have opened to the day. When I ought to have been an object of your compassion, I might have perished; now, when you find I can serve your interests, you will affect to acknowledge me and reward me; I will not accept your rewards. In either case, virtuous or wicked, the man who has been compelled to do without assistance, will spurn interference.

Common life would supply illustrations of the effect of desertion. Some of the most resolute men have become such, partly from being left friendless in early life. The case has also sometimes happened, that a wife and mother, remarkable perhaps for gentleness and acquiescence before, has been compelled, after the death of her husband on whom she depended, and when she has met with nothing but neglect or unkindness from relatives and those who had been deemed friends, to adopt a plan of her own, and has executed it with a resolution which has astonished even herself.

One regrets that the signal examples, real or fictitious, that most readily present themselves, are still of the depraved order. I fancy myself to see Marius sitting on the ruins of Carthage, where no arch or column that remained unshaken amidst the desolation, could present a stronger image of a firmness beyond the power of calamitous events to subdue. The rigid constancy which had before distinguished his character, would be aggravated by his finding himself thus an outcast from all human society; and he would proudly shake off every sentiment that had ever for an instant checked his designs by reminding him of social obligations. The lonely individual was placed in the alternative of becoming the victim or the antagonist of the power of the empire. While, with a spirit capable of confronting that power, he resolved, amidst those ruins, on a great experiment, he would enjoy a kind of sullen luxury in surveying the dreary situation, and recollecting the circumstances of his expulsion; since they would seem to him to sanction an unlimited vengeance; to present what had been his country as the pure legitimate prize for desperate achievement; and to give him a proud consequence in being reduced to maintain singly a quarrel against the bulk of mankind. He would exult that

his desolate condition gave him a proof of his possessing a mind which no misfortunes could repress or intimidate, and that it kindled an animosity intense enough to force that mind from firm endurance into impetuous action. He would feel as if he became stronger for enterprise, in proportion as he became more inexorable; and the sentiment with which he quitted his solitude would be, Rome expelled her patriot, let her receive her evil genius.

The decision of Satan, in *Paradise Lost*, is represented as consolidated by his reflections on his hopeless banishment from heaven, which oppress him with sadness for a moment, but he soon resumes his invincible spirit, and utters the impious but sublime sentiment,

"What matter where, if *I* be still the same."

You remember how this effect of desolation is represented in Charles de Moor. His father's supposed cruel rejection consigned him irretrievably to the career of atrocious enterprise, in which, notwithstanding the most interesting emotions of humanity and tenderness, he persisted with heroic determination till he considered his destiny as accomplished.

*Success* tends considerably to reinforce this character. It is true that a man possessing it in a high degree will not lose it by occasional failure: for if the failure was caused by something entirely beyond the reach of all human knowledge and ability, he will remember that fortitude is the virtue required in meeting unfavorable events which in no sense depended on him; if by something which *might* have been known and prevented, he will feel that even the experience of failure completes his competence, by admonishing his prudence, and enlarging his understanding. But as all schemes and measures of action have reference to some end, and if wise, are correctly adapted to attain that end, continual failure would show something essentially wrong in a man's system, and either destroy his confidence, or prove it to be mere absurdity or obstinacy. On the contrary, when a man has ascertained by experiment the justness of his calculations and the extent of his powers, when he has measured his force with various persons, when he has braved and conquered difficulty, and partly seized the prize, he will advance with increasing assurance to the trials which still await him.

In some men whose lives have been spent in constant perils, continued success has produced a confidence beyond its rational effect, by inspiring a persuasion that the common laws of human affairs were, in their case, superseded by the decrees of a peculiar destiny, securing them from almost the possibility of disaster; and this

superstitious feeling, though it has displaced the unconquerable resolution from its rational basis, has yet often produced the most wonderful effects. This persuasion dictated Cæsar's expression to the mariner who was terrified at the storm and billows, "What art thou afraid of? Thy vessel carries Cæsar." This idea had some influence among the intrepid men in the time of the English Commonwealth.

The willfulness of an obstinate person is sometimes fortified by some single instance of remarkable success in his undertakings, which is promptly recalled in every case where his decisions are questioned or opposed, as a proof that he must in this instance too be right; especially if that one success happened contrary to your predictions.

I shall only add, and without illustration, that the habit of associating with *inferiors*, among whom a man can always, and therefore does always, take the lead, is very conducive to a subordinate kind of decision of character. You may see this exemplified any day in an ignorant country squire among his vassals; especially if he wears the superadded majesty of Justice of the Peace.

In viewing the characters and actions of the men who have possessed the supreme degree of the quality which I have attempted to describe, one cannot but wish it were possible to know how much of this astonishing superiority was created by the circumstances in which they were placed; but it seems inevitable to believe that there was some vast difference from ordinary men in the very structure of the mind. In observing lately a man who appeared too vacant almost to think of a purpose, too indifferent to resolve upon it, and too sluggish to execute it if he had resolved. I was distinctly struck with the idea of the difference between him and Marius, of whom I happened to have been thinking; and I felt it utterly beyond my power to believe that any circumstances on earth, though ever so perfectly combined and adapted, would have produced in this man, if placed under their fullest influence from his childhood, any resemblance (beyond perhaps a diminutive kind of revenge and cruelty) of the formidable Roman.

It is needless to discuss whether a person who is practically evinced, at the age of maturity, to want the stamina of this character, can, by any process, acquire it. Indeed such a person cannot have sufficient force of *will* to make the complete experiment. If there is the unconquerable *will* that would persist to seize all possible means, and apply them in order to attain such an end, it would prove the existence already of a high degree of the character sought;



and if there is not this *will*, how then is the supposed attainment possible?

Yet though it is improbable that a very irresolute man can never become a habitually decisive one, it should be observed, that since there are many *degrees* of determined character, and since the essential principles of it, partially existing in those degrees, cannot be supposed subject to an absolute and ultimate limitation, like the dimension of the bodily stature, it might be possible to apply a discipline which should advance a man from the first degree to the second, and from that to the third, and how much further—it will be well worth his trying, after he shall have made this first progress. I have but a very imperfect conception of the discipline; but will suggest a hint or two.

And in the first place, the indispensable necessity of a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the concerns before us, seems too obvious for remark; and yet no man has been sufficiently sensible of it, till he has been placed in circumstances which forced him to act before he had time, or after he had made ineffectual efforts, to obtain the needful information. The pain of having brought things to an unfortunate issue, is hardly greater than that of proceeding in the conscious ignorance which continually threatens such an issue. While thus proceeding without plan or guide, because he positively cannot be permitted to remain in inaction, a man looks round for information as eagerly as a benighted wanderer would for the light of a human dwelling. He perhaps labors to recollect what he thinks he once heard or read in relation to a similar situation, without dreaming at the time he heard or read it, that such instruction could ever be of importance to him; and is distressed to find that he cannot accurately recollect it. He would give a considerable sum, if some particular book could be brought to him at the instant; or a certain document which he believes to be in existence; or the detail of a process, the terms of a prescription, or the model of an implement. He thinks how many people know, without its being of any present use to them, exactly what could be of such important service to him, if he could know it. In some cases, a line, a sentence, a monosyllable of affirming or denying, or a momentary sight of an object, would be inexpressibly valuable and welcome. And he resolves that if he can once happily escape from the present difficulty, he will apply himself day and night to obtain knowledge, rather than be so involved and harrassed again. It might even be of service to have been occasionally forced to act under the disadvantage of conscious ignorance, if the affair was not very important, nor the con-

sequence very injurious, as an effectual lesson on the necessity of knowledge in order to decision either of plan or execution. It is indeed an extreme case that will compel a considerate man to act without knowledge; yet he may often be necessitated to proceed to action, when he is sensible his information does not extend to the whole of the concern in which he is going to commit himself. And in this case, he will feel no little uneasiness, while transacting that part of it in which his knowledge is competent, when he looks forward to the point where that knowledge terminates; unless he is conscious of a very prompt faculty of catching information at the moment that he wants it for use; as Indians set out on a long journey with but a small stock of provision, because they are certain that their bows or guns will procure it by the way. It is one of the nicest points of wisdom to decide how much less than complete knowledge, in any question of practical interest, will warrant a man to venture on an undertaking, in the presumption that the deficiency will be supplied in time to prevent either perplexity or disaster.

A thousand familiar instances show the effect of perfect knowledge on determination. An artizan may be said to be decisive as to the mode of working a piece of iron or wood, because he is certain of the proper process and the effect. A man perfectly acquainted with the intricate paths of a district, takes the right one without a moment's hesitation; while a stranger who has only some very vague information, is lost in perplexity. It is easy to imagine what a number of circumstances may occur in the course of a life or even of a year, in which a man cannot thus readily determine, and thus confidently proceed, without an extent and exactness of knowledge which few persons have application enough to acquire.

In connection with the necessity of knowledge, I would suggest the importance of cultivating, with the utmost industry, a conclusive manner of reasoning. In the first place, let the general course of thinking *be* reasoning; for it should be remembered that this name does not belong to a series of thoughts and fancies which follow one another without deduction or dependence, and which can therefore no more bring a subject to a proper issue, than a number of separate links will answer the mechanical purpose of a chain. The conclusion which terminates such a series, does not deserve the name of *result*, since it has little more than a casual connection with what went before: the conclusion might as well have taken place at an earlier point of the train, or have been deferred till that train had been extended much further. Instead of



having been busily employed in this kind of thinking, for perhaps many hours, a man might as well have been sleeping all the time; since the single thought which is now to determine his conduct, might have happened to be the first thought that occurred to him on awaking. It only *happens* to occur to him now; it does not follow from what he has been thinking all these hours; at least, he cannot prove that some other thought might not just as properly have come in its place, at the end of this long series. It is easy to see how feeble that determination is likely to be, which is formed on so narrow a ground as the last accidental idea that comes into the mind, or on so loose a ground as this crude uncombined assemblage of ideas. Indeed it is difficult to form a determination at all on such slight ground. A man delays, and waits for some more satisfactory thought to occur to him; and perhaps he has not waited long, before an idea arises in his mind of a quite contrary tendency to the last. As this additional idea is not, more than that which preceded it, the result of any process of reasoning, nor brings with it any arguments, it is likely to give place soon to another, and still another; and they are all in succession of equal authority, that is, of none. If at last an idea occurs to him which seems of considerable authority, he may here make a stand, and adopt his resolution, with firmness, as he thinks, and commence the execution. But still, as he cannot *verify* the authority of the principle which has determined him, his resolution is likely to prove treacherous and evanescent in any serious trial. A principle so little defined and established by sound reasoning, is not *terra firma* for a man to trust himself upon; it is only as a slight incrustation on a yielding element; it is like the sand on the surface of the lake Serbonis, which broke away under the unfortunate army which had begun to advance on it, mistaking it for solid ground.—These remarks may seem to refer only to a *single instance* of deliberation; but they are equally applicable to all the deliberations and undertakings of a man's life: the same closely connected manner of thinking, which is so necessary to give firmness of determination and of conduct in a particular instance, will if habitual, greatly contribute to form a decisive character.

Not only should thinking be thus reduced by a rigid discipline, to a train, in which all the parts at once depend upon and support one another, but also this train should be followed on to a full conclusion. It should be held as an absolute law, that the question must be disposed of before it is let alone. The mind may carry on this accu-

rate process to some length, and then stop through indolence, or divert through levity; but it can never possess that rational confidence in its opinions which is requisite to the character in question, till it is conscious of acquiring them from trains of reasoning which are followed on to their result. The habit of thinking thus completely is indispensable to the character in general; and in any particular instance, it is found that short pieces of trains of reasoning, though correct as far as they go, are inadequate to qualify a man for the immediate concern. They are besides of little value for the assistance of future thinking; because from being left thus incomplete, they are but slightly retained by the mind, and soon sink away; in the same manner as walls left unfinished speedily moulder.

After these remarks, I should take occasion to observe, that a vigorous exercise of thought may sometimes for a while seem to increase the difficulty of decision, by discovering a great number of unthought-of reasons for a measure and against it, so that even a discriminating mind may, during a short space, find itself in the state of the magnetic needle under the equator. But no case in the world can really have this perfect equality of opposite reasons; nor will it long appear to have it, in the estimate of a clear and strongly exerted intellect, which after some time will ascertain, though the difference is small, which side of the question has twenty, and which has but nineteen.

Another thing that would powerfully assist toward complete decision, both in the particular instance, and in the general spirit of the character, is for a man to place himself in a situation like that in which Cæsar placed his soldiers, when he burnt the ships which brought them to land. If his judgment is *really* decided, let him commit himself irretrievably by doing something which shall compel him to do more, which shall necessitate him to do all. If a man resolves as a general intention to be a philanthropist, I would say to him, Form some actual plan of philanthropy, and begin the execution of it to-morrow, (perhaps I should say *to-day*), so explicitly, that you cannot relinquish it without becoming despicable even in your own estimation. If a man would be a hero, let him, if it is possible to find a good cause in arms, go instantly to the camp. If a man would be a traveller through distant countries, let him actually prepare to set off. Let him not still dwell, in imagination, on mountains, rivers, and temples; but give directions about his remittances, his clothes, or the carriage, or the vessel, in which he is to go. Ledyard surprised the official person who asked him

how soon he could be ready to set off for the interior of Africa, by replying promptly and firmly, "To-morrow."

Again, it is highly conducive to a manly firmness, that the interests in which it is exerted, should be of a dignified order, so as to give the passions an ample scope, and a noble object. The degradation that should devote these passions to mean and trivial pursuits, would in general, I should think, likewise debilitate their energy, and therefore preclude strength of character.

And finally, if I would repeat that one should think a man's own conscientious approbation of his conduct must be of vast importance to his decision in the outset, and his persevering constancy, I must at the same time acknowledge that it is astonishing to observe how many of the eminent examples have been very wicked men. These must certainly be deemed also examples of the original want, or the deprava-

tion, or the destruction, of the moral sense.

I am sorry, and I attribute it to the defect of memory, that a greater proportion of the illustrations introduced in this essay, are not as conspicuous for goodness as for power. It is melancholy to contemplate beings, whom our imagination represents as capable, (when they possessed great external means in addition to the force of their minds,) of the grandest utility, capable of vindicating each good cause which has languished in a world adverse to all goodness, and capable of intimidating the collective vices of a nation or an age—becoming themselves the very centres and volcanoes of those vices; and it is melancholy to follow them in serious thought, from this region, of which not all the powers and difficulties and inhabitants together could have subdued their adamantine resolution, to the Supreme Tribunal where that resolution must tremble and melt away.

THE END.

## ORIGIN OF INFANT BAPTISM AND COMMUNION.

IN the third century there is clear evidence of infant baptism and infant communion. In ecclesiastical history, these two practices may be traced to the same origin, and they are both supported by the same arguments. In proof of this we will cite some authorities.

Says St. Austin, "No one who professes himself a Christian of the catholic faith denies or doubts, that children, without receiving the grace of regeneration in Christ, and without eating his flesh and drinking his blood, (i. e. without baptism and the Lord's supper) have not life in them, and therefore are liable to everlasting punishment." Would Austin, do we think, ever talk after this rate, unless he knew it to have been the practice of the eastern as well as the western churches to give the Lord's supper to children? and very remarkable is another passage of St. Austin, which Dr. Wall has taken notice of, and thus translated—"The Christians of Africa do well call baptism itself one's salvation; and the sacrament of Christ's body one's life. From whence is this, but, as I suppose, from that ancient and apostolical tradition, by which the

churches of Christ do naturally hold that without baptism and partaking of the Lord's table, none can come, either to the kingdom of God, or to salvation and eternal life? For the scripture, as I showed before, says the same." This is without doubt, clear evidence that St. Austin was satisfied that infant communion was as necessary and as much apostolic as infant baptism. All agree that the false construction of the passage in the 6th chap. of John, 53d verse, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," was the erroneous ground on which they placed the necessity of infant communion. On a similar perversion of certain texts, which speak of baptism, they ground the necessity of imposing this rite on infants. History traces both these ceremonies to one common origin, namely, necessity; and supports both by the same process of argument.

It seems then impossible to invalidate the historic arguments for infant communion, without ruining to the same extent the arguments in favor of infant baptism.—*Dr. Chapin's Letters.*

THE  
T R A V E L S  
OF  
TRUE GODLINESS.

By BENJAMIN KEACH.

CHAPTER I.

*What True Godliness is. His Origin and Antiquity.*

TRUE Godliness being a great stranger to most men, and indeed known but by few, I shall, in the first place, before I treat of his travels, and of the entertainment he meets with, give you a description of him; because many persons are subject to so great an error, as to take *Morality* for him: some also take *Counterfeit Godliness* for him; and others, out of ignorance, (to say no worse,) rail, and ignominiously call him *Singularity, Stubbornness, Pride and Rebellion*, as if he were not fit to live, he being considered a seditious disturber of kingdoms, cities, towns and villages, wherever he comes; yea, such a factious and quarrelsome companion, that he is indeed the cause of all those unhappy differences, divisions, troubles, and miseries, that are in the world. I conclude, therefore, nothing is more necessary, than to take off that mask which his implacable enemies have put upon him, and clear him of all unjust slanders, and reproaches of the sons of Belial; so that he may appear in his own original and spotless innocence, that none may be afraid of him, or be unwilling to entertain him, nor ashamed to own him, and make him their bosom companion.

Know, therefore, in the first place, that *Godliness* consists in the right knowledge of divine truths, or fundamental principles of the Gospel, which all men ought to know,

and be established in, that would be saved. Without controversy, "great is the mystery of godliness. God manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up to glory." 1 Tim. iii. 16. *These great truths of the Christian religion, are called Godliness.*

Now, should any demand farther to hear more particularly what those principles of divine truth, or fundamentals of the Christian faith be, which are the essentials of *True Godliness*, I answer,

1. That there is one eternal, infinite, most holy, most wise, just, good and gracious God, or glorious Deity, subsisting in three distinct persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these are one—that is, one in essence.

2. That this God, out of his great love and goodness, hath given us one sure, and infallible rule of faith and practice, viz. the Holy Scriptures, by which we may know, not only that there is a God and Creator, but the manner of the creation of the world, and of all things, in six days; together with the design, or reason, wherefore he made all things; and also to show us how sin came into the world, and what righteousness it is which God's holy nature requires, to our justification, or discharge from the guilt of sin, &c. viz. by a Redeemer—his own Son, whom he sent into the world; and that there is no other rule or way to know these things, so as for men to be saved, but by revelation, or the sacred records of the holy Scriptures. And that the mystery of salvation lies above human reason,



and cannot be known by the natural light in men.

3. That our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the surety of the new covenant, and only Mediator between God and man, is truly God of the essence of the Father, and truly man of the substance of the virgin Mary, consisting of these two natures in one person; and that redemption, peace, and reconciliation, are by this Lord Jesus Christ alone.

4. That justification and pardon of sin is alone by that full satisfaction which Christ made to God's justice; and that is apprehended by faith alone, through the Holy Spirit.

5. That all men who are, or can be saved, must be renewed, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

6. That there will be a resurrection of the bodies of all men at the last day.

7. That there will be an eternal judgment, that is, all shall be brought to the tribunal of Jesus Christ in the great day, and give an account for all things done in the body; and that there will be a future state of glory and eternal happiness of all true believers, and of eternal torment and misery of all unbelievers and ungodly persons, who live and die in their sins.

Now, I say, in the true knowledge and belief of these principles (which comprehend the fundamentals of true religion, or the Christian faith) does *True Godliness* consist, as to his *essential* part.

Secondly, *Godliness*, as to his *inward* parts, is a holy conformity to these sacred and divine principles, which natural men understand not. *True Godliness* consists in the light of supernatural truths and life of grace, God manifesting himself in the light of those glorious principles, and working the life of supernatural grace in the soul by the Holy Ghost. It consists in the saving and experimental knowledge of God and Jesus Christ; in having the evil qualities of the soul removed, and heavenly habits infused in their room; or in a gracious conformity, disposition, and affection of the heart to God, cleaving to all truths made known to us, finding the powerful influences of the gospel and spirit of Christ upon us, whereby our souls are brought into the image and likeness of his death and resurrection. This is *True Godliness*. Not a bare living up to the natural principles of morality nor an historical, notional, or dogmatical knowledge of the sacred gospel, and its precepts, but in a faithful living up to the principles of the gospel, discharging our duties with as much readiness and faithfulness towards God as towards man, so that our conscience may be kept void of offence towards both. Acts xxiv. 16.

It consists in forsaking every sin, and

loathing it as the greatest evil, and cleaving to God in sincerity of heart, valuing him above all; and, from a principle of divine love, being willingly subject to all his laws and appointments. *Godliness* makes a man say with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" &c. Psal. lxxiii. 25. St. Austin saith, "He loves not Christ at all, that loves him not above all." He that entertains *True Godliness*, is as zealous for the *work* of religion, as for the *wages* of religion. Some there be, who serve God, that they may serve themselves upon God. But a true Christian desires grace, not only that God would glorify him in heaven, but that he may glorify God on earth. He cries, "Lord, rather let me have a good heart, than a great estate." Though he loves many things *beside* God, yet he loves nothing *above* God. This man fears sin more than suffering, and therefore he will suffer rather than sin.

Thirdly, That you may have a complete and perfect knowledge of him, it may not be amiss if I describe his form, together with the very habiliments he continually wears.

The external parts of *True Godliness* are very beautiful; and no wonder that they are so, seeing he was fashioned by the wisdom of the only wise God our Saviour, the works of whose hands are all glorious. But this, viz. the formation of *Godliness*, being one of the highest, and most admirable contrivances of his eternal wisdom, must of necessity excel in glory and amiableness. His form and external beauty, therefore, are such, that he needs no human artifice to paint or adorn him, or to illustrate or set off his comeliness of countenance; for there is nothing defective as to his evangelical and apostolical form, as he came out of his great Creator's hands. And as there is nothing from head to foot that is superfluous, so every line and lineament, vein, nerve and sinew of him, are in such an exact and admirable order placed, that to his beauty there can be no addition. Every one, therefore, that adds too, or alters any thing, touching the form of *True Godliness*, mars and defiles instead of beautifying. Besides, God hath strictly forbidden any thing of this nature to be done. "Add thou not unto his word, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar," (Prov. xxx. 6,) by ascribing that to God which is none of his. Do not the Papists call those superstitious and vain ceremonies used in their church, by the name of God's worship? And what is this less than putting a lie upon him? Besides, it reflects upon the wisdom of God, to attempt to change or alter any thing in the form of *Godliness*, as if he did not know best how he himself would be worshipped; but must be indebt-

ed to man for his help, wisdom, and contrivances, touching many things that are called decent and necessary. And does it not reflect upon the care and faithfulness of God, to suppose that he should not himself take care to lay down in his blessed word, things which are all necessary to the form of *Godliness*, without weak man's care and wisdom, to supply what he should omit?

All, therefore, may perceive, that *True Godliness* never changes his countenance: he is the very same, and not altered in the least from the aspect he bore in primitive times; nay, and there is indeed nothing more foreign to him than those *pompous garbs, superstitious vestments, images, crossings, salt, oil, holy water*; and other ceremonies, which are by many thought necessary to his existence. Therefore take heed you do not mistake the counterfeit form of *Godliness* for the true one. It is only necessary to note one thing more, viz. you must be sure to receive the power of *Godliness* with his form; for his form, without his inward life and power, will do you no good: it is but as the body without the soul, or the shell without the kernel, or the cabinet without the jewel. Neither ought any to slight his form, for you may remember what the apostle speaks of "the form of doctrine," Rom. vi. 17, and of "the form of sound words," 2 Tim. i. 13, for as the true faith must be held fast, so must the profession of it also. You may, it is true, meet with a shell without the kernel; but it is rare to meet the kernel without the shell!

Having thus briefly given you the description both of the inside and outside power and form of *True Godliness*, we shall proceed to show you whose offspring he is. By his name, *Godliness*, or *God-likeness*, we may discover from whence he descends, and learn of what noble parentage he is. He is indeed high-born, the great and glorious offspring of the Lord Jehovah, the Almighty Prince of heaven and earth, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the universal monarch of the world, whose kingdom ruleth over all. And as this is his noble extract, so likewise he is always in high favor with his prince; for there is not one in heaven or earth, whom he loves more, or in whom he takes more delight, than in *True Godliness*; nor is there any indeed more like him, or that more represents him in all the earth for he bears his express and heavenly image; yea, and such a venerable respect and gracious esteem hath he of him, that those who love him, he loves; those who hate him, he hates; those who receive him, he receives, and those who reject him, he rejects; where he comes to dwell, there God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost dwell.

*Godliness* is of great *antiquity*: nay, according to the description we gave you of him, in the first place, we may well say, he is without beginning of days, for *Truth*, (sometimes he bears that name,) dwelt in God from everlasting. But if we speak of his antiquity, in respect of his dwelling here below, the first man that knew him was Adam; who, whilst he stood in the state of innocency, enjoyed his company, but by the malice of a great and potent enemy he was abused, and his image so defaced and marred, that he forsook his habitation, which was the ruin of our first parents, and their whole posterity; and had not the King of heaven and earth, through his infinite wisdom, provided a way to recover man from his lost estate, *Godliness* had made his abode no longer in this world; for by means of corruption of nature, there was brought forth a monster whose name was *Vice*, otherwise *Lust*, who found so much favor with Adam's children, that *Godliness* was utterly discountenanced. Though he was the offspring of Heaven, and the only delight of Jehovah, and unto man the greatest friend and benefactor, striving to enrich him, cheer his heart, and make him truly noble and renowned on earth, and bring him back into his primitive glory, and thereby at last make him eternally happy in heaven, yet he was so lamentably slighted, that but one of Adam's offspring cared for him at that time. And he, for entertaining him with that just and good respect he deserved was by his brother, whose name was Cain, basely murdered. *Godliness*, by this, perceived very early with what kind of usage and entertainment amongst the children of men he was likely to meet. And truly never was there any one so nobly descended, and of such an excellent, peaceable, a nature and behaviour, so dealt with as *Godliness* hath been, from the beginning to this day, except the Prince of *Godliness* himself. Yet he found some friends after Abel was slain, who entertained him kindly: and though they were reproached, hated, and persecuted for showing favor to him, yet they never lost by him, but were infinite gainers; nay, so great a friend was he to the next man who eminently embraced him, that he saved him from the grave; he sent him to heaven without calling at the gate of death. It is impossible to describe what sweet and heavenly communion, true joy and felicity, this good man had with *Godliness*, for the space of three hundred years; for so long they abode together on earth, and now dwell together with the Father of *True Godliness*, and his only begotten Son in heaven. Some time after this great Prince (for so they are all made who entertain *True Godliness*,) was carried to heaven, the dominion of *Vice*



became so complete, and the guilt of men grew to such an awful magnitude that Jehovah was constrained to destroy them from off the earth, by a fearful and amazing flood of water. There was, at this time, but one man on earth, (viz. *Noah*), who was an eminent lover of *Godliness*, though it is not to be doubted but his wife and sons especially two of them, were likewise in some measure friends to him. Noah was commissioned to advocate the cause of virtue and the character of *True Godliness* by public preaching for one hundred and twenty years; but we are not informed of the least impression being on any heart, so dominant was sin.

But to proceed in this brief account of the antiquity of *Godliness*, it will not be amiss if we speak of the next renowned man after Noah, who entertained him, and how he was blessed in so doing: his name at first was Abram, but afterwards Abraham. This man lived for sometime amongst a blind and idolatrous people, and was ignorant of *True Godliness*; but when he became acquainted with him, few men ever loved him better. He made him his bosom companion, and chief delight (and so indeed must every one that entertains him;) and hereby he became great, and his glory and renown were spread abroad. Indeed, because he cherished *True Godliness*, he was called the "friend of God," and the father of all true lovers of *Godliness*: and besides the outward blessings this faithful man reaped as the fruit or reward of *Godliness*, which were many, for he had much cattle, men-servants, sheep, camels and asses; he was blessed also with all spiritual blessings, viz. he had sweet fellowship and communion with God, and abounded in faith, love, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

I might proceed further, and show you who they were that entertained *Godliness* in the succeeding ages, for the space of more than two thousand years, what great blessings he brought them, and what they suffered for his sake; but I can give you a brief hint or two upon this account. Lot was saved by him from the fire of Sodom, for the angel could do nothing till Lot was gone forth. Joseph suffered for him by his envious brethren, but *Godliness* advanced him for his integrity at last. David, for the love he bare to him, was for many years together, greatly persecuted, but afterwards *Godliness* raised him to great honor, made him rich, and set a crown upon his head.

I might show how in ancient days, he was very much hated and persecuted: some of his true friends cast into a fiery furnace, and another into a lion's den; yet they never lost any thing by him, nor did they ever repent the entertainment they gave him. If we come into the times of the

Gospel, it is well known what usage he met with in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and his blessed apostles. Afterwards, by the heathen Emperors, he was most cruelly hated and persecuted; and those who entertained him were put to all manner of deaths and torments imaginable. Lastly, we might show you what hard usage he met with by Counterfeit *Godliness*, I mean papistry, for near twelve hundred years; and how many of his dear children and servants have, for the sake of him, been burnt to death, and otherwise tormented, in most nations in Europe. But what has been said is sufficient in relation to the antiquity of *True Godliness*, and his various treatment in former days.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The chief Enemies of Godliness.*

HAVING given you a brief account of the antiquity of *True Godliness*, and some of those great abuses he met with in ancient times, it may not be amiss, before I come to treat of his *Travels* and entertainment in these latter days, to give a description of some of his chief' adversaries, that true lovers of *Godliness* may be aware of them; and those who have a mind to be acquainted with him, and are hindered from receiving him into their houses, may know the cause and reason of it.

1. One of the chief enemies of this great favorite of heaven, is the Devil; nor is there any one that hates him more.

2. *Sin*, or *Vice*, and as it is sometimes termed, *Lust*.

3. The Flesh.

4. The World.

But this general description is not sufficient to discover the great danger men are in, by certain emissaries and servants of those grand adversaries which many are ready to entertain as friends, not suspecting their fatal danger. I shall, therefore, give you an account of a few of them, and tell you their names. 1. *Unbelief*. 2. *Pride*. 3. *Vain-Glory*. 4. *Formality*. 5. *Hypocrisy*. 6. *Opposition*. 7. *Heresy*. 8. *Superstition*. 9. *Idolatry*. 10. *Prosperity*. 11. *Persecution*. 12. *Ignorance*. 13. *Blind Zeal*. 14. *Vain-Hope*. 15. *Sloth*, or *Idleness*. 16. *Covetousness*. 17. *Old-Custom*. 18. *Evil-Example*. 19. *Self-Righteousness*. 20. *Presumption*. 21. *Despair*. 22. *Slavish-Fear*. 23. *Sensual-Pleasure*. 24. *Apostacy*: with many others of like quality, too tedious here to reckon up; but by mentioning the names of these, you may easily discern who and what the others are, who with their attendants are all implacable



ble enemies to *True Godliness*, and endeavor to hinder his being entertained where he comes, as you will find in the ensuing history of his Travels.

### CHAPTER III.

*Godliness, having received a Commission to travel, and visit the Children of Men, comes to a certain Town on the Confines of Babylon, where Riches dwelt. His Usage and Treatment there.*

THE great Jehovah, Father of *True Grace* or *Godliness*, out of his infinite goodness to mankind, was graciously pleased to send them a Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who is "able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him." Heb. vii. 25. But in his eternal wisdom hath so ordained, that no man should have any saving benefit by this glorious Saviour, but he who doth receive, entertain, and embrace *True Godliness*. I now, therefore, resume my allegorical narrative, by considering *Godliness* as having received a commission from the King of heaven and earth, to travel and ascertain who would embrace and entertain him. His commission was very large: not limited to the land of Canaan, but embracing all nations, countries, and kingdoms. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15. And to visit the rich and the poor, the old and young; as well the king on the throne as the beggar on the dunghill; even all, bond and free, male and female. Nor was he sent to travel alone, but had a very rich and glorious retinue always with him; neither did he come to any man's house empty handed, but brought with him most rich and glorious presents of the choicest things of heaven, the worth of which is infinitely beyond our computation. I first saw him draw near a city in which *Riches* dwelt; a man to whom great deference was paid by the inhabitants, and into whose noble mansion I hoped he would be readily welcomed.

*Godliness* knocked, however, very hard and often, before any within would give an answer, *Riches* being full of business, either telling his money, or casting up his accounts, to see what his neighbors owed him, or consulting new projects to increase his store; for he is a person never satisfied. Besides, the times being very perilous, his mind was filled with perplexing and vexatious thoughts, how to save and keep what he had already gotten; so that he had no leisure to listen to the continual knocking of *True Godliness* at his door, he was therefore forced to wait a long time. But that which grieved this high-

born prince most all was this, viz: he perceived that no sooner did some other guests come to his door, who were much inferior, as to birth and quality, (and indeed not worthy of the least regard, not having business of that great weight and moment with him which he had) than he opened his door immediately to them; yet before this renowned personage could get in, *Riches* had so many base and ill-bred servants in his house, that they shut the door, so that he could not get so much as one foot in. The guests he so readily opened to, were "the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life," 1 John ii. 16. These he took much delight in, and kept company with continually; sometimes they conducted him to the tavern, sometimes to the play-house, and sometimes amused him at bowls, cards, and dice, and divers other sensual sports and pleasures. But at last he was taken very sick, and *Godliness* still waited at his door. At this time one was in his house, who forced him to listen to this earnest and continual knocking. His name was Mr. *Fearful*. He is one that *Riches* doth not at all love, but when sickness comes he is grievously troubled with him; and he made him at this season cry out, Who is there? Who is at my door?

*Godli.* I am here, and have a long time waited at your door.

*Riches.* What is your name?

*Godli.* My name is *True Godliness*, one that you have little reason to slight, neglect, and condemn as you have done; for there is none you stand more in need of, nor can do you that good which I can and will do you, if you but open your door and receive me.

*Riches.* Sir, I am troubled that I have not regarded you all this while, for I have a great reverence and respect for *Godliness*; God forbid I should keep you out any longer!

Upon this the whole house was in an uproar, for he had (as I told you before) divers loose, ill-bred, or rather hell-bred servants, all bitter enemies to *True Godliness*; their names were, *Presumption*, *Pride*, *Unbelief*, *Ignorance*, *Malice*, *Vain-Hope*, *Covetousness*, and several other base persons, whom he had brought up, and a long time cherished in his house. These seemed greatly concerned, that the least heed or attention should be given to *True Godliness*. They also inquired who was the cause of the proposal to admit *Godliness*. At last, understanding it was Mr. *Fearful*, they presently joined together to fall upon him, and expel him from the house. *Presumption* struck the first blow, and spoke to this purpose:

*Presump.* Are not you a base fellow, so to disturb my master, as to cause him to

doubt of the sufficiency of his strong and impregnable fortification, wherein he hath long and satisfactorily placed his confidence, and now to force him to incline to open to *True Godliness*, who is our utter enemy? Is not our master an honest man? What can you charge him with? What cause or ground is there for this disturbance? Hath he not done much good in the parish where he lives, and given many a piece of bread at his door? I engage it will go well with him. *Fearful*, what do you say?

*Fearful*. Truly, Sir, seeing him very sick, I thought he might die in his sins.

*Presump.* Thou fool! what if he should, did not Jesus Christ die for sinners? God is merciful, and will forgive men their sins at any time, even at the last hour, if they do but call upon him. Besides, *Fearful*, are you mad, to give way, much more to force him to incline to open to *True Godliness*? for if once he is admitted to the house, you will be immediately turned out and hardly, if ever, have the least countenance.

*Fearful*. Truly, *Presumption*, the fault was not principally mine; I was partly forced to do what I did.

*Presump.* Forced! by whom? who forced you?

*Fearful*. It was the steward of the house, who keeps the records, or an account of all that is done, whose name is *Conscience*. He, finding much guilt lying upon him through his cruelty, hard-heartedness, and debauched life, stirred me up to do what I have done: nay, *Conscience* told him he had been so vile and graceless, that if he died, he would go immediately to hell; therefore you cannot censure me for disquieting him.

*Pride*. Harken to me a little: Is it not below such a brave and heroic spirit as always attends *Riches*, to be troubled about sin, or to give way to a clamorous *Conscience*, and this ill-bred *Fearful*? I hate the thoughts of it; this is the way to bring him to reproach and shame amongst his neighbors, and to make men of distinction, who have been his companions, laugh at him, and condemn him. My great prince *Lucifer* sent me into his service, and I will not betray my trust, ever to consent that this unwelcome and hateful traveller, should be admitted, who would beguile my prince of his right.

*Unbelief*. Dear Sirs, there is no danger. I agree with my friend and brother *Presumption*, that his condition is good enough, let *Conscience* say what he will. If there be a hell, (though I much question it,) yet he will go, should he die, I will assure you, to heaven.

*Ignor.* What a tumult is here! If our master were poor, there might be some

ground for this base *Fearful*, to disquiet him. I can give as good counsel as any of you: "Money answers all things;" he may "make him friends with the mammon of unrighteousness;" let him give a little more than usual to the poor, and that will merit God's favor. Who would not part with a little money, to get peace of conscience, and purchase a place in heaven? Charity is more than all your new notions of religion: Charity covers a multitude of sins. Though I know but little, yet I am not such an ignoramus as some think.

*Vain-Hope*. I am of the mind with my brother, *Unbelief*; and it was I also, you know, who have kept up his spirits all along, and did what I could to stop *steward Conscience* from giving way to Mr. *Fearful* to open the door: let him therefore put his trust in me, and he will fear nothing.

*Presump.* Come, cease this noise: all is well yet; *Godliness* is not let in, and our master is much better than he was; and though *Conscience* inclines to embrace this our enemy, yet you will find he will not be regarded in a little while. Let us all agree, at present, to stir up *Riches'* eldest son, whose name is *Honor*, the father's favorite, and the hopes of all the family, to see what he can effect, in order to keep our enemy *Godliness* out. Now our friend *Pride* is the fittest to be employed in this work; for he is much in favor with our master's eldest son.

After a short time it resulted thus: *Riches* being recovered, he consulted with *Worldly-Honor*, a great enemy to *True Godliness*, which was one reason why the Almighty said a great while ago, "How can you believe that receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" John v. 44. Now *Pride*, *Ambition* and *Honor*, being all three the natural offspring of *Riches*, so much possessed his affection, that *Godliness* was kept out, (making good that word, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God—God is not in all his thoughts:") and *Conscience* being at this time almost stifled, *Fearful* was forced to fly and conceal himself till another season. But *Godliness* remained at his door for a long time—even till he waxed old; and *Conscience*, having recovered a little strength by reason of his going now and then to hear a sermon, stirred up Mr. *Fearful* again to open the door, and had almost prevailed, had not a base servant of *Riches*, (who, I take it, was his *Purse-bearer*,) bestirred himself. His name was *Covetousness*, an implacable enemy to *True Godliness*. He perceiving that *Godliness* was like to meet with some entertainment, spoke to *Riches* after this sort:



*Covet.* Sir, will you be so unwise now in your old age, as to open your door to this stranger? It will be to your great injury, I assure you: and besides, I, who have been a drudge to you all along, and the means by which you have gained the most of your estate, shall, at the very instant you receive him into your house, be turned out; nay, and not only so, but be also brought under a severe sentence, and be condemned to die for idolatry. And then your treasures will fly; for you will find him a chargeable gentleman, teaching a doctrine that I am sure you hate; and I cannot blame you, for it is very destructive to your interest.

*Riches.* What doctrine is that? Prithee, inform me, for I have a very great esteem for thee; and in truth, for a long time have been sensible of the service thou hast done me; for when I kept my old servant *Prodigality* for a purse keeper, I could never thrive; but since I met with thee, I have increased my substance exceedingly.

*Covet.* Why, Sir, then I will tell you; he teaches *Riches* to be what he calls *rich in good works*, that is, generous in building up religion in the world, and to follow a new master, who had not one foot of land in all the world, nor a house to dwell in; no, nor one penny of money; whose disciples were generally poor, illiterate and contemptible people. Sir, in a word, if you open to *Godliness*, you will be undone; for though you are not put upon selling all you have presently, as some that would have received him in ancient days were required to do, yet you will be forced to give to the poor saints, as they call them, not merely a little, but according to what your estate and their necessity is. Nay, you will never know when you have done, for he will find out for you every day new objects of charity; he will tell you there are so many poor heathen without Bibles or teachers, and so many poor and desolate churches, so many poor widows, and so many neglected children in the city, and nobody knows what other objects of charity, (as he calls them,) for whom efforts must be made; and who should do it, he will say, but *Riches*? nay, it is a thousand to one, if he do not put you to build an hospital, or endow some professorship. Besides, when you have done this, he will not let you rest, but will tell you, whensoever Christ's members are sick, you must visit them; and when hungry, feed them; when naked, clothe them; and when in prison, you must relieve them. And then, if times of persecution for the sake of religion should come, he will send you to prison, to see if Christ be not there; I mean some of his poor children, who lie there for his sake. If there be any, though they may not in all points of religion agree with you, yet he will tell you, you must not let

them want, whilst you have enough to supply their necessity; and if you do, he will tell you, "Go ye cursed," &c. will be your portion at last. Beside all this, you do not think what an amount of money he will tell you it is your duty to give to Pastors and Ministers of the gospel, who are his great instruments and promoters in the world; nay, Sir, he positively affirms, you ought not only to give them just so much as will supply their necessities, but that it is your duty to give, and their right to have, a plentiful allowance, so that they may be freed from all the perplexing cares of this life; and may have as much out of your estate, as to be able to give to others also, that so they may be examples of charity; (and indeed I cannot deny but that the Scriptures do say they ought to be men given to hospitality, Tit. i. 8,) and many of them are poor, and therefore that they should do this *Godliness* says is impossible, unless they are capacitated so to do by *Riches*. Moreover, this *Godliness* is so unhappy, and, in truth, hath always been, that he hath many great and potent enemies; so that they who receive and entertain him have been exposed to great troubles and frequent persecutions.

*Riches.* I must confess thou hast said enough to make me forever out of love with *Godliness*; I cannot bear the thoughts of entertaining such a guest as this in my house: but what shall I do with my clamorous steward *Conscience*? for he every now and then tells me I must listen to him, and stirs up that *Fearful*, a fellow that I certainly hate, but cannot get rid of, to terrify me with the thoughts of hell and damnation; telling me that "without holiness, (I must confess I have so read,) no man shall see the Lord;" and that "whoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

*Covet.* Why truly, Sir, I see no remedy but you must resolve to keep him under. I perceive he is the chief cause of all the disturbance and trouble that is in your house. But for the way this shall be done, I must refer you to that worthy gentleman, and understanding servant of yours, Dr. *Self-love*; for in this case I am not qualified to give counsel, being not brought up in learning; but he and Sir *Worldly-Wisdom*, being both able divines, will be sure to find out a ready way to do it, so that you shall not be troubled with him any more; and this I will assure you, if I can be helpful to them in the business, I will be at your command.

Dr. *Self-love* and Sir *Worldly-Wisdom*, being at hand, *Riches* called for them, to whom he addressed himself after this manner:

*Riches.* Gentlemen, you have both great



learning and experience in the laws, divine and human. Be pleased to give me a little of your counsel. My case is this: there is one who calls himself *True Godliness*, at my door, and presses hard for entertainment; but by means of a description I have lately had of his manners and attendants, I perceive it will be dangerous at this time for me to receive him, or to show him kindness. But I have a troublesome steward, whom I cannot get rid of, who too much favors him, and is ready often to open the door; so that by his means, and one *Fearful*, a timorous fellow, whom he stirs up, I have of late had but very little quiet. Now, what will you advise me to do in this sad condition?

Dr. *Self-love*. You must not give way to *Conscience*. Sir, if you follow his dictates, and embrace this *Godliness*, you will be undone, and your wife and children will soon be brought to a piece of bread, notwithstanding your great estate. Sir, your great fault hath been this, (I perceive it clearly,) you have read too much of late; why should you concern yourself with the Bible? I think it had been well if it had never been translated into our mother tongue; this hath given him opportunity to disturb your mind. Come, give over this in the first place. The cause, you know, of a distemper must be first removed, or no radical cure can be effected; it is enough for you to mind your secular affairs; things of religion belong to religious men; and when *Conscience* for any sin distresses you, divert yourself amongst the brave heroes you used to keep company with; go to the tavern, or to some play-house; but at no time read any book besides your books of accompts, and romances. What this traveller saith, is but mysterious nonsense, enough to make men mad; I do not say, you should not be religious at all: no, God forbid I should give you such counsel; but let it be *liberal* religion. If we try to do as we would be done by, we shall fare well enough. There is no need to entertain strict *Godliness*, because you may be saved without it; else, what will become of the greatest part of the word! Go to church and hear prayers, but be sure never to go to any churches where methodistical preachers endeavor to reach your conscience. Can any man persuade me his soul cannot be saved, unless he "sell all he hath, and give it to the poor," and so "become a fool, that he may be wise?"

Sir *Worldly-wisdom*. Mr. *Riches*, the counsel which my brother hath given is very good: he sure you are never led, by the dictates of your fanatical steward, *Conscience*, to expose yourself to any loss or reproach for religion. You hear you may be, nay, ought to be religious: and what is

religion, but to live an honest and sober life; to fear God, honor our rulers, say our prayers, and pay our debts? But I have just now thought of a way that will do. You have a great estate, pray get another member into your family—keep a *chaplain*; this done, you will find all will be well, and you will hear no more complaints from within or without; for you will be taken by all your servants, and others too, for a very godly man; neither believe nor regard what such babblers say, who talk of things that lie above all human reason, as Mr. *Self-Love* noted. Can three be one, or one be three? or, can a man be that God who made the world? or, can his righteousness be yours? or, can God give men a religion to guide them, and yet have *mysteries* in it? No, no, your own deeds must justify you: this *Godliness* is but foolishness; regard him not.

*Riches*, having thanked them for their good counsel, with a great deal of joy, retires himself, being very well satisfied with the advice that his neighbors, Doctor *Self-Love* and Sir *Worldly-Wisdom* had given him.

*Riches* now got a chaplain, and instead of opening to *True Godliness*, he introduced *Counterfeit Godliness*, which was occasioned through his own *Ignorance*, and the foolish counsel he had received. Now, this man, as it appears, proved a sad fellow; for though he was a good scholar, being brought up in a university, yet his religion consisted merely in strict forms and outward show. There was indeed not one in all the family that hated *True Godliness* more than he; for he made songs of him, and scoffed, jeered, and derided him continually, calling him a mysterious and nonsensical fellow, talking of things above all human reason, and above all belief. He also stirred up all the neighborhood to find fault and quarrel with those who were friends of *True Godliness*, while he affirmed that he himself was properly entitled to that name. Poor *Conscience* himself was in some measure deceived and appeased. He saw so much appearance of piety in the order of family worship, and going to meeting, and reading the prayer book, that he seemed to think his hopes of his master's reformation were now realized.

*Godliness* now perceived he was like to have but cool entertainment at this house; so having waited at *Riches'* gate till all his patience was almost exhausted, he began to think of a removal, and to travel to some other place: but before he took his final farewell, he was resolved to speak his mind freely to him, thereby to leave him without excuse; and therefore addressed him after this manner, being at the door ready to depart:

*Godli.* Well, *Riches*, I see now very clearly you did but flatter me when you began to hearken to your poor steward, *Conscience*, relative to my reception into your house; for it is very plain, you are grown far worse than before, and have blinded his eyes, by entertaining another, who calls himself by my name. But before I depart, I will show you the great danger you are in, and the cause of it. The truth is, you have got such a company of loose, base and deceitful servants, that they will utterly undo you, and bring upon you the eternal ruin of your poor soul, which I designed, by my coming to you, to save, and make happy forever. There was never any who entertained those graceless enemies of God, but were ruined by them at last; nay, and not only eternally in the world to come, but many times outwardly in this world; therefore I advise and entreat you to get rid of them, and promise I will help you to far better servants in their stead. For, first of all, can you think it will be safe for you to keep *Presumption* in your house, since there is scarce a more deceitful and dangerous wretch in the world? How many thousands of poor souls has he destroyed by causing them to presume on the mercy of *God*, and the death of *Christ*, and yet live in *sin*, *pride*, and *covetousness*, and in a vile manner hating and condemning me? Doth not *God* say, "It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and yet you are persuaded by him to think it is an easy thing. And doth not the Scripture say, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of *God*?" Matt. v. 20; and yet he tells you, that by doing a few good deeds, or by giving a little of your abundance to the poor, your state is safe, whereas many of the Pharisees, as to acts of charity, exceedingly outdid you: nay, doth not St. Paul say, "Though he gave all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burned, yet without charity (that is to say, true love to *God* and *Godliness*) he was nothing?" 1 Cor. xiii. 3; and yet you though you slight and condemn *Godliness*, are taught to presume on *God's* mercy, who hath notwithstanding positively said concerning you, and such as you are, "He that made them, will not save them; and he that formed them, will shew them no favor," Isaiah xxvii. 11.

As touching what *Self-love* saith, it is abominable. Do you not find the Lord Jesus say, that "Unless a man deny himself, he cannot be my disciple?" Matt. xvi. 24. Now, this fellow is one of the rest there meant, even *Self-love* and *Self-righteousness*, as well as *Sinful-self* and *Natu-*

*ral-self*. Sir, you must get rid of them all, or perish forever.

And then as to *Worldly-Wisdom*, he is Satan's *Attorney-general*, that ever gives counsel to all that hearken to him against *God* and *Christ*, and all revealed religion. He deceives and ruins the souls of men: ridicules all supernatural discoveries of *God*, or revealed religion, and would indeed paganize this land again. Doth not Paul say, "The world by wisdom knew not *God*?" He would have you believe nothing to be a truth or principle of religion, that lies above your own reason; and therefore he says that there is nothing mysterious in Christianity; by which he gives the Scripture the lie, that says, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of *Godliness*." 1 Tim. iii. 16.

He will not suffer those that hearken to him to believe the Trinity of persons in the sacred Godhead, nor that *Christ* is the most high *God*, and yet very *Man*, in one person, because it lies above man's wisdom or understanding to comprehend it; nor that sinners can be justified by the active and passive obedience of *Christ*, though it is positively asserted to be thus by the Spirit of *God* in his word.

This *Worldly-Wisdom* and Sir *Human-Reason* taught the Greeks (in the apostles' time) to condemn the preaching of *Christ* crucified, and salvation by him, as a foolish notion or idle dream, and so they strive to persuade people to think now, and thus to trample the chief principles of the Christian faith under their feet.

Alas! it is evident that there are many earthly things, or things in nature, which no man can comprehend, nor give a reason for; and is it surprising then, that the mysteries of the gospel, or the deep things of *God*, are above human reason to conceive, so as fully to comprehend them?

Yet, though these mysteries are above human reason, it is not against reason to believe them. Is it not reasonable that men believe what the *God of Truth* affirms? These scornors would not have you "sell all you have and give it to the poor;" yet you know the Lord Jesus Christ gave that counsel to a rich man; and if you do not part with all in your love and affection, and actually when *God* calls for it, you can be no true Christian, because you do not love *God* with all your heart, nor above your gold and silver, or earthly riches.

Moreover, if you will not choose to become a fool in the esteem of carnal men, you can never be truly wise. See 1 Cor. iii. 18, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise." Let worldly wise



men account you a fool; if you are spiritually wise, wise unto salvation, it matters not how you are called and censured by such whom Satan has blinded. Doth not the apostle say, "That the world by wisdom knew not God?"

Your servant *Unbelief*, is a wicked, devouring monster, that hath sent millions to hell, by hindering them from believing what God hath said in his word. He will not suffer you to believe nor give credit to that word, "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John. i. 15; nor to that word, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3; and "he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16; and many like awakening sentences. And thus he teaches you to make God a liar; for he hath said, *You shall, without true faith, perish in your sins*: but *Unbelief* says, *Ye shall be saved though ye live in your sins*.

As to what *Ignorance* says, That you may purchase or merit peace of conscience by giving more liberally to the poor; and that you may also make you friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; he would make you think, that God and Jesus Christ will in that way become your friends, and save your soul when you die.

Sir, if you gave all your goods to feed the poor, (which you are far from doing,) yet you would be miserable; nothing that you can do can change your state, or procure God's acceptance of your person; no you must obtain union with Christ, and receive me, or perish in your sins forever.

If money could purchase peace of conscience, or giving liberally to the poor merit heaven, what rich man need to fear being damned? And then also it might be very easy "for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven," which the Lord Christ says is not an easy thing. Sir, while the world is in your heart, in your love and affection, "the love of the Father is not in you," though you give much to the poor. As the young man, who was very rich, wanted one thing, so do you; that is, true faith and an interest in Christ. "You must be born again, or you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and that you can never be, until you receive the Holy Spirit, and let in *True Godliness*, Whosoever receives me, receives the Spirit, and true and right principles; such as these, that "all your own righteousness is as filthy rags;" and that all works before grace, are dead works, and profit men nothing. Moreover, That Christ's righteousness, exclusive of all inherent righteousness, alone justifies a believing sinner.

As concerning *Pride*, whom you entertain, as a sweet and beloved friend, he hath been the ruin of many souls; nay, and not

only men, but angels also; for it is thought he was the principal one who wrought their destruction, and from heaven cast them down to hell, and of angels of light, made devils. But, Sir, remember that word, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." What became of the great king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, for entertaining this fellow? Was it not *Pride* that brought him down, and turned him a grazing, to eat straw like oxen? Dan. iii. 4. Moreover, what became of Herod the Great, who was fond of this companion? Did he not bring God's heavy wrath upon him in such a fearful manner, that a blessed angel was sent to smite him with death immediately, and he was eaten of worms? Acts xii. 23. Have you not read, that, "the day cometh which shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble?" Hos. iv. 1. This haughty *Pride* is one of those seven things, as Solomon shows, which God hates, Prov. vi. 16. If you will not, O *Riches* be persuaded from all I have said, to turn him out of your house, even take what will follow.

*Vain-Hope*, I know, is one that hath kept up your spirits, and spoken peace to you all along; but he will leave you like a false-hearted, and treacherous friend, when you come into distress. You hope to be saved, (and so did many thousands that are now in outer darkness;) but alas! what ground have you to build your hope upon? "The hypocrite's hope shall perish; whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be as a spiders web," Job xviii. 13, 14. Ah! Sir, what will your hope avail you, though you have gained the world, when God taketh away your soul?" Job xxvii. 8.

And lastly, as to your chosen friend *Covetousness*, he is made up of idolatry; and what can be more detestable to the Lord? He is indeed the ringleader to almost all manner of wickedness; nay, there is scarcely a viler and more abominable wretch breathing on earth, therefore justly called, "the root of all evil," 1 Tim. vi. 10. He hath taught many to play the thief, others to commit treason, and others to murder innocents for their inheritance; he is guilty of bribery, usury, extortion and oppression: it was he that made poor Achan lose his life: he also contrived the death of Naboth and his sons; and, more than all, he tempted Judas to sell, and basely to betray my dear Lord and Master Jesus Christ, for thirty pieces of silver. Do not blame me, therefore, if I bear so hard against him. Moreover, I can seldom get one foot into any rich man's house through his means; it is he and his companions who keep me out: he hath, through his hard heartedness, almost famished all the poor,



both in city and country; and hath also of late very near betrayed my whole interest that I have in the world, into the enemy's hands: he hath also grievously corrupted many who profess kindness to me, by encumbering their minds so with the affairs of this life, that they cannot find the way to the church. When they should be hearing God's word, he forces them to abide in their shops; nor will he suffer many of them to take a little time to pray in their families, nor in their closets. He has also exposed many of my poor ministers to many great straits and necessities, by which means their heads have been so filled with the cares of this life, that they have been incapacitated to preach the gospel as they ought to preach it; nor can they get such helps as are necessary, and all because of him. Nay, he hath almost undone every nation, by corrupting the law, and subverting justice, causing judges to judge for reward, and lawyers to plead more for fees than equity; and hath spoiled commerce, for he hath monopolized trades and commodities, so that many men have been undone by him. I cannot, Sir, reckon up all his horrible crimes; and is this he you so dearly love? And must I be slighted and disregarded by you through the love you bear to him? Alas! Sir, he will bring your soul, if you follow him, to destruction. Pray, what became of Ananias and Sapphira, whom he forced to tell a lie to the Holy Ghost? Acts v. 1-4. Who was it that caused the young man in the gospel to fall short of heaven, and to go away from Jesus Christ very sorrowful, and Demas to turn apostate, and embrace this evil world? Was it not *Covetousness*? Ah! Sir, take heed of this misereant; for though some wicked ones of the earth may bless you, yet he will cause God to hate you. See what David saith, "The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." Ps. l. 3. Consider these things, and be persuaded to put away all these deceitful companions, which you have a long time nourished in your house. Oh! that you would now at last, before I leave you, hearken to my counsel, and receive me into your house, and renounce that monster you have lately embraced, who calls himself by my name! What do you say, *Riches*?

*Riches.* Do you think I shall give entertainment to you, and lose all my great honor and credit amongst men?

*Godli.* Is not that honor that comes from God better than all the vain honor poor mortals can give you? You have, I am sure, a rare example to follow in this case: remember Moses; he was not of your mind. Some rich and noble men have, for my sake, denied themselves all the glory of this world, and accounted the reproaches of

Christ greater riches than earthly honors and the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season.

*Riches.* If others were such fools to disgrace themselves, what is that to me?

*Godli.* Sir, I perceive your condition is miserable, for you seem to be hardened; and whilst you have had gracious means afforded you, to bring you to repentance, you are grown worse and worse: however, let me tell you, if you die before you have embraced and received me into your house, you will perish in your sins, and hell will be your portion forever. Those who reject me, reject God and Jesus Christ also; and to tell you the truth, all this time I have been at your door, the Lord Jesus hath stood waiting likewise.

*Riches.* Leave your canting. Do you begin to threaten me? am I not my own master? would you lord it over me? I perceive what you aim at: you would have me entertain you that so your poor despised offspring may take advantage of me. I could find in my heart to be revenged on you, and set all the rabble of the town upon you. Sirrah! I have considered the business, and have had advice what to do from two able counsellors, Dr. *Self-Love* and Sir *Worldly-Wisdom*.

*Godli.* Sir, St. Paul did not take advice of those two depraved, degraded counsellors; that is, "he consulted not with flesh and blood."

*Riches.* Will you not leave your prating? You are called *Godliness*, but that is not your name: you are, I understand, a factious fellow, and your name is *Stubbornness*, alias *Singularity*; one may know what you are by the many names you go by. Know you, therefore, friend, that I have received the *True Godliness* already, and him will I keep. He is indeed an honorable person, one whom great men love, and is in favor with the princes of the earth: but as for you, I see no encouragement for any one to respect you; for as most people in all nations speak against you, and hate you, so you would, I know, soon spoil all my joys, and bring nothing but sorrow and fear along with you. I must not so much as make a false statement for my advantage, but you would threaten me with eternal ruin; nor go to a tavern, and by chance take a glass too much, and let now and then an oath slip, but you would stir up my steward, *Conscience*, to censure me unmercifully; but I shall teach him his place. Beside, if I should not give to the poor according to your humor, I should be censured and condemned by you as a wicked person; yea, and most of my habitual desires you would call hurtful lusts, and say they must be mortified, and that my greatest favorite must not be spared. I perceive what a fool you would make me; be gone from my

door, or I will call one of my servants, who shall drive you out of the town.

His anger now rose excessively, and he began violently to thrust *Godliness* from the door, which no sooner did his chaplain, Mr. *Reader*, perceive, but he came to his assistance, with cruel rage, being stirred up by *Envy*, and accused *Godliness* in a most base and cruel manner, calling him all the vilest names he could devise, enough to make any ignorant and unthinking man conclude *True Godliness* was a hateful companion, and before all things to be avoided and discountenanced. His chaplain also warmly challenged him to dispute with him, and boisterously urged that text, "Be not righteous over much, neither make thyself over wise; why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" Eccl. vii. 16. He thought with this one weapon to have knocked *True Godliness* down, and have spoiled his travelling forever.

But he soon answered and said, that no man could be truly righteous over much, nor have too much of that pure wisdom that is from above; but that a man might, he told him, under pretence of righteousness, do more than God required of him, and so be righteous over much, (as the Papists and others are,) and thereby destroy himself, since will-worship was of such an abominable nature; and that a man also might be over wise in his own conceit.

At this answer the dispute ended: and *Riches* perceiving his chaplain was worsted, disliked *True Godliness* much more, and raised all the rabble of the town upon him; among which were *Pride*, *Ignorance*, *Witful*, *Hate Good*, *Outside*, *Riot*, *Wasteful*, *Hard Heart*, *Giddy-Head*, *Pick-Thank*, *Rob-Saint*, and other such ill-bred fellows. And moreover he affirmed, if he were not gone soon, he would send for the two constables, *Oppression* and *Cruelty*, to put him where he should be safe. Upon which, *Godliness* was forced to get away and hide himself, or else he had been cruelly beaten, or basely put to death: but he, being out of their reach, by the providence of God escaped without injury.

*Godliness* being thus forced to leave *Riches'* door, *Vice* and *Ungodliness* took the full possession of his house, and *Godliness* went on his way, grieved to see how he had hitherto been slighted and abused.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*Godliness, in his Travels, came to a Cottage, where dwelt one called Poverty, with whom he earnestly desired to make his Abode, but was denied Entertainment.*

been served by *Riches*, and that he could not, with the strongest arguments and motives imaginable, get entertainment with him, travelled farther: and at last chanced to come to a small village, at the farthest end of which, (upon the common,) he espied a little cottage; a poor old ruinous building, the windows of which being broken, they had crowded into the holes some old clothes, to keep out the cold; and, by its being propped up, it seemed as if it was ready to fall. But, however, he remembering what his blessed Lord and Master said, "the poor receive the gospel," resolved to go thither, for he "is no respecter of persons." He is as willing to be a guest to the poor as to the rich, and to dwell with the peasant as with the prince, or to make his abode in a cottage as in a palace. Being come up to the door, he understood the man's name who dwelt there was *Poverty*. Now *Godliness* knocked five or six times before he had any answer: but at last, being between sleeping and waking, *Poverty* asked, (though very faintly,) Who is there? Who is at the door?

*Godli.* A friend; my name is *True Godliness*.

*Pov.* I have heard of your name, yet know you not: and moreover, I was forbid formerly to entertain one who goes by your name; and it may be you as far as I know. I have heard that many thousands, through your means, have lost their lives as well as their estates. And though I have not much to lose, yet my life is as dear to me as any man's.

*Godli.* I will do thee no wrong, my friend; but contrary-wise, if you open the door and kindly entertain me, you shall find me the best friend that ever you met with.

*Pov.* You speak well; but what is it you will do for me? Have you any money to impart, to procure food for my family, or clothing for my almost naked children?

*Godli.* I cannot at present assure thee of worldly good things: I do not proffer men money, or hire them to open their doors to me: if I am not freely and heartily received, I will not come in at all. Friend. I do not trade in gold and silver; but this I will promise, if thou wilt kindly let me in, whatsoever good thing the Lord sees thou dost need, thou shalt, upon the word of Christ himself, have it. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. vi. 33. You complain of want; come open to me: do you not remember that word, "They that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing?" Ps. xxxiv. 10. "The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Ps. lxxxiv. 11. What dost thou say, *Poverty*?

GODLINESS, finding how basely he had

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*Pov.* I am in a very low condition: what you mean I cannot tell; but this I know, my head and heart are filled about other things. Alas! what can you think to meet with, or expect from me? Do you not see what a number of poor, hungry and ragged children I have? It is enough for me to get bread for them: I must leave the things which you talk of to my betters; I mean such who have more time to mind them, and are better learned. I cannot tell what to say to you.

Truly, we poor folks in the country think it is godliness enough for us to bear an honest mind, and pay truly for what we have, and go to church now and then, to hear some good prayers, and say the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, sometimes at home, when we come from work, if we do not chance to fall asleep first; but if I thought it would be for my profit, I would open to you.

*Godli.* *Poverty*, I will assure thee it will be infinitely for thy advantage; hast thou not read—

*Pov.* I cannot read, Sir.

*Godli.* But have you not heard then of that word, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8; and that word, "Godliness with contentment is great gain?" And now, because I see you are weak, I will tell you of some of those great blessings you will gain, if you receive me in truth. Wheresoever I come, I bring reconciliation with God, pardon of sin, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost; I teach men to be diligent and frugal, and so help them to a decent competency; nay, I raise men to honor too; I will make thee a son of God, an heir of heaven, and at last set a crown of endless glory on thy head. What dost thou say, *Poverty*?

*Pov.* I had rather have better clothes, and good provisions, and a better habitation; these things suit my present necessity; but as touching those things you talk of, I do not well understand what they are; they may be but fancies. Besides, what work will you set me about? I cannot endure hard labor.

*Godli.* But stay, *Poverty*, what kind of fellows are those you have in your house?

*Pov.* What is that to you; why do you not answer my questions?

*Godli.* Why then I will you; you must believe in Christ, and very fervently read the Holy Bible, and every Lord's-day, with great reverence and seriousness, hear God's blessed word, and pray at least twice a day; nay, and I shall teach you to be more painful and laborious in your trade and worldly business; but this, I know, cannot be done, unless you put away that horde of loose fellows in your house.

Now *Poverty* had, it seems, divers base and lazy companions, who were all grand enemies to *True Godliness*; their names were *Unbelief*, *Ignorance*, *Idleness*, *Wasteful*, and *Fear-Man*, together with some others. His own children, viz: *Light-Fingers*, *Faint-Heart*, and *Carping-Care*, were no better. Now, when he felt disposed to open to *Godliness*, these hindered him.

First, *Sloth* and *Idleness* would not let him rise to call upon God, nor take pains to pull up the briars and thorns that grew in his heart; by which means his field lay barren and untilled, nothing growing therein, but what the ground brought forth naturally: nay, these made him of such a sluggish temper, and such a lover of rest, that he complained sometimes because he could not go without motion; nay, he was unwilling to be at the trouble of feeding himself; therefore would wish that men might live as trees and plants do. I remember a very wise man told me, "That he hides his hand in his bosom, and it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth," Prov. xxvi. 15, by the sad influence of these two lazy fellows, *Sloth* and *Idleness*.

*Unbelief* told him that those things of which *Godliness* talked were mere fictions; being unseen things, there was no reality in them, but when *Poverty* questioned the truth of what *Unbelief* spoke upon this account, and requested some explanations, then the wretch told him they were things far out of his reach, and that he had no part or lot in them: neither could they (if it were possible to obtain them) answer his present necessities.

*Light-Fingers* told him, he had been for a long while his best friend; and if it had not been for him, he had been starved long before now.

*Distrust* agreed to the discourse of his thieving brother, and positively said, if he turned *Light-Fingers* out of his house, (as he knew he must if *Godliness* came in,) he would certainly beg from door to door.

*Wasteful* told him, that *True Godliness*, if entertained, would not suffer him to buy such good provisions as he was used to do, on trust, unless he knew he was able to pay for them; and that he would not suffer him to go any more to merry meetings, and carouse amongst good fellows at the bar-room, nor recreate himself at cards, bowls, ninepins, and other sports, for money, on holidays; and that he must be content with such things as he had, and never lose a day's work to gratify the lusts of the flesh, and that also he must change his company; which particularly was grievous for *Poverty* to hear.

*Carping-Care* filled his head so full of distracting thoughts, that he had not time to think of God, Christ, nor his own soul, from one week to another; but his great



study was either to think where to borrow money, and so get more in debt, or else how to pay what he owed, to get out of debt, or how he should obtain employment. By this means he was filled with sad thoughts, not knowing how he should procure food or clothing for the future. Besides, it could not go out of his mind, but that at one time or other he should be arrested, and thrown into a jail, having many times fearfully broken his word.

*Faint-Heart* and *Fear-Man* represented to him the danger he would be in upon many considerations, if *True Godliness* was entertained.

For, first, they told him how contemptible real godliness was grown, being of very little credit or esteem amongst men by reason of *Vice*, which was never more rampant and popular; insomuch that *True Godliness* was likely to be driven out of the world. *Mr. Riches*, who is lord of the manor, hath beat him away from his door, and hateth him with a perfect hatred; now, if you entertain him, he will soon hear of it, and so will become your deadly enemy, and will pull down your cottage, or warn you out, or be sure not to let you have a farthing of the poor's-money, nor ever set you to work any more; and what will become then of your poor wife and children? Nay, said they, we will tell you more; do you not hear what cruel edicts have been made against *True Godliness*? And how many of the Protestant churches have been pulled down and utterly demolished? And how he is persecuted almost every where? A more liberal and pleasing form of religion is now becoming popular, and will in a little time be generally embraced, and they who entertain *True Godliness* must expect to be reproached and reviled, nay, murdered. Besides, do you not hear that many who have for a long time entertained him, have lately turned him out of doors? they are weary of him, or afraid to own him; and is this a time for you to think of embracing him? *Poverty* (said they) pity yourself, and have more wit; you are poor enough already, and this is the way to make yourself more miserable. If *Riches* will not entertain him, who hath many advantages to relieve and help himself in distressing times, and sad exigencies, over what *Poverty* hath, or can promise himself, there is no ground of encouragement for you to open to him.

Upon this poor *Poverty* resolved not to let *True Godliness* have a lodging in his house, but rather, instead thereof, to put stronger bolts and bars on his door. *Godliness* having waited to hear what these enemies of his would say, and perceiving they had now done, he broke silence, and began to speak after this manner.

*Godli.* Well, *Poverty*, I expected but little less from you when I perceived you were resolved to hearken to those graceless companions and wicked children, for they would do their worst to keep me out; but I shall now, however, to undeceive you, answer them all.

As to those lazy companions, *Sloth* and *Idleness*, who would not wish you to labor for the good either of body or soul, they have in part brought you into this poor and miserable condition. Oh! how many have they brought to beg their bread from door to door! and stirred up others to rob, steal, and commit horrible murders, to uphold them in their loose, lazy, and ungodly lives; by which means they have brought, and daily do bring, a number of men and women to the gallows; but the greatest mischief they do, is to the souls of men; for they cast thousands into such a deep sleep, that they will never awake till they lift up their eyes in hell. They will not suffer them to labor to find out their danger, till it is too late; and others, when they do perceive their woful condition, are hindered by them from endeavoring timely, and in a right manner, to get out; they many times cry, "Lord, help us!" and "Lord, have mercy upon us!" but never strive to take hold of the offers of his grace and mercy, by cleaving to Christ, and leaving their abominable wickedness. It is the idle soul that suffers hunger, who shall beg at harvest, and have nothing; though there is bread enough and to spare in God's house, yet they will not suffer you to seek for it; but cause you to cry, "Yet a little sleep, yet a little slumber, yet a little folding of the hands to sleep." Prov. xxiv. 33. Is it not sad, notwithstanding your house is on fire, you cannot through *Sloth* and *Idleness* rise up? You are just ready to drop into ruin, and yet will not endeavor to deliver your own soul. O remember that word! "Take the slothful and unprofitable servant, and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xxv. 30. And then,

As to *Light-Fingers*, he is a thief, and if you follow his dictates, he will bring you to the gibbet; besides, "No thief shall enter into the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. vi. 10.

*Wasteful*, his brother, is almost as bad as he. It was this vain fellow that brought the poor "Prodigal to eat husks with the swine," Luke xv. It is he who not only causes you to waste, and foolishly spend your money, but also your precious time, which should be improved for the good of your perishing soul. *Poverty*, can it do you any harm to be taught to become a better husband, and not to consume the little you sometimes get, amongst riotous company, which might be

a great comfort to your poor wife and children? Let me now appeal to my neighbor *Morality*, whether there is any ground for you to refuse to entertain me, because I teach you to be content with mean things, hard fare, and put you upon severe labor, and tell you not to run into debt, unless you know how to pay it.

*Ignorance* is a murderer; and hath destroyed millions of souls: though there was a time indeed when God seemed to wink at him; Acts, xvii. 30; that is, did not lay (as it were) his hands immediately upon him; he now is left altogether inexcusable, because God hath afforded you a sufficiency of light, to bring you to the true knowledge of salvation, the necessity of faith and true godliness, if you would escape the damnation of hell.

I found *Unbelief* the other day with *Riches*, and indeed I can come to no one's door, but I find him within. He affirms that all my promises are fictions; being unseen things, they have no reality in them, or things to which you can never attain; and if you could, yet they could not answer your present necessities. If you would give credit to such a notorious liar, murderer, and blasphemer, who certainly, in a sly and treacherous manner, seeks to stab you at the heart, who can help it? Are Christ's promises of grace and peace here, and glory hereafter, because not seen with external eyes, fictions? He will tell you also, ere long, if you will believe him, that there is no God nor Devil, Heaven nor Hell, because not visibly seen with eyes; he may suggest the one to you, as well as the other. Come, *Poverty*, thousands of my children, by blessed experience, have found my promises no fictions nor idle fancies, but things full of reality, marrow and fatness: "O taste and see how good the Lord is!" And why may not you obtain these glorious good things, viz: union and communion with God, pardon of sin, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, as well as others? They were commonly given in the time of the gospel to the *poor*. Come, *Poverty*, these things are thine, (as sure as God is in heaven,) if thou wilt but let me in; poor Lazarus understood them, and experienced the sweetness of them, and shall through eternity. And then, lastly, have you no need of those good things of mine, because they may not so directly answer your outward necessity? Are not the necessities of your soul more to be minded than to get store of meat, drink, clothes, silver, and gold? What are all these things to the love and favor of God, an interest in Christ, and a right to the kingdom of heaven? How soon, alas! may your life be gone, and what good will these things do you then? Do you not see they perish in

the using? And as they are corruptible, so likewise they can never satisfy nor fill the desires of your soul, nor do they suit the necessities thereof. Consider, can any of these things make thy soul happy? Can gold or silver enrich it? Or the rarest worldly dainties feed it? Or wine cheer it? No, *Poverty*: if thou hadst the things of this world in abundance, yet till thou letest me in, and makest me thy chief companion, thy soul will be miserable. What is it to have plenty of all good things, and no God, no Christ, no pardon, no peace, but contrary-wise, the curse of God, horror of conscience, and ruin at last? Thou wilt, *Poverty*, become more happy if thou dost open thy door to me, and thou and I dwell together, than the proudest monarch of the earth: thy comforts, inward peace, and joy, will excel theirs, and thy riches be more abundant in quantity, besides the rare and excellent quality of them; nay, and thy glory will be far more transcendent; and besides, it will abide with thee to all eternity.

As touching *Carping-Care*, he hath almost broken thy heart already: he will not let thee sleep in the night; but by telling thee of thy wants and necessities, sadly disturbs thy mind, but never gave thee a farthing; and why shouldst thou hearken to him any longer? He is thy utter enemy as well as mine. Turn him away, and Christ will care for you.

He has depressed thy very spirits, and weakened thy body, marred thy senses, especially the spiritual senses of thy soul; so that thou canst not think one serious thought all the day; nay, when *Sloth* and *Idleness* will let thee go to hear God's word, he follows thee thither too; and so confounds thy mind with wandering thoughts, that devotion is spoiled, and you can profit nothing; therefore, I beseech you, thrust him out.

*Distrust*, that faithless fellow, sets on this base *Carping-Care*, to perplex thy mind; and this is not all; for he tells thee, if thou turnest *Light-Fingers* out of doors, thou wilt certainly go a begging. Come, *Poverty*, they are a pack of sad villains, set on by their great master *Apollyon*, to bring thee to shame, as if there was no way to live, but by breaking God's commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." And is not he a wretch that shall call into question the care and faithfulness of God, whose promises are to feed and clothe thee, and to supply all thy necessities in the way of thy duty, so that thou shalt "want no good thing" (as I stated before,) though thou possibly mayst think that good for thee, which God knows is not? Isa. xl. 11. Psal. xxiv. 9, 10.

And now, in the last place, let me speak a few words to those cowardly fellows, *Faint-Heart* and *Fear-man*. Isa. li. 12.



They would have you fear man more than God; and yet I am ready to believe some of their words take as much place upon your heart as any thing you heard from the other.

They say I am grown here of late very contemptible, and am of very little esteem or credit amongst men, Isa. liii. 3, and that I shall ere long be constrained to fly into a corner to hide myself.

To this I answer, I never had much esteem amongst great men; nay, in every age of the world very few gave credit to me; and now being come almost to the end of my travels into the last and worst age, I expect no other usage. How should I have many to admire and fall in love with me, when the Bible positively says, "All the world wondered after the beast," Rev. xiii. 3, that is, they were in love with, and admired *Counterfeit Godliness*? and the truth is, I marvel not at it, because the False Prophets have ever been more readily embraced than the True, and their words generally believed. "If another comes in his own name," saith Jesus Christ, "him you will receive." The reason is easily discerned: Because they soothe the people in their sins, 1 Kings xxii. 13, 22. Alas! do not you see how *Counterfeit Godliness* gives liberty to men to please their sensual lusts, teaching an easier way to Heaven than I ever did or can? for I always taught, as at this day, the doctrine of Self-denial, Mark viii. 34, the necessity of faith in Christ, regeneration, and mortification of sin, &c. John iii. 5.

They say, I shall ere long be forced to fly into some corner; if it should chance so to come to pass, wo be to you; and indeed you had the more need with all speed to receive me into your house, lest if I retire you find me not, and so perish in your sins. John viii. 22.

Again, What though *Riches* hath rejected me, he never had much kindness for me, but was generally my enemy; and whereas they say, he will be displeased with you, and warn you out of your house, if you entertain me, what then? Christ will receive you into his house, and you had better possess him for a friend, than any prince upon the earth: "When my father and mother forsake me," saith David, "the Lord will take me up." Have you not read of that poor man whom the Pharisees excommunicated for cleaving to me, and how the Lord Jesus graciously received him? John ix. 35. Come, *Poverty*, do not fear the worst that men can do; God will help you, and he is above them all; and it will be but a little while before that word shall be made good, "Your brethren that hated you, and cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he will appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed,"

Isa. lxvi. 5. Alas! man, the time is at hand when all will be undone, and be forced to cry out, Wo, wo, wo, that ever they were born! except those who have made me the joy and delight of their hearts. Say to the righteous, "it shall be well with him; wo to the wicked, it shall be ill with him," Isa. iii. 10. It is sad, indeed, to see any leave me in my adversity; but they were false friends, and let them go, John vi. 66; but do thou but kindly embrace me, and I will keep thee from falling; nay, thou shalt find me a sure refuge and defence to thee in the day of distress, Ps. ix. 9. Yea, and I will store thee with such good things as the rich have not. I am resolved to feast thy soul continually, and never leave thee nor forsake thee. Isa. xxv. 6. Come, thou and I shall live most happily together, notwithstanding thou art poor, if we can but get my dear friend *Content* to dwell with us. 1 Tim. vi. 6. What dost thou say, *Poverty*? Shall I find admittance?

Notwithstanding all that *Godliness* could say, *Poverty* would not give way to him, but began to give him reviling words, saying, he was born a gentleman, though he was fallen to decay; and that he would not suffer such tumults at his door; for it seems while *Godliness* was praying and pressing for entertainment, one *Persecution*, the offspring of Adam's eldest son Cain, Gen. iv. 8, had collected many wicked fellows together, to drive *Godliness* away from *Poverty's* door: so by the opposition within doors and without, *Godliness* found no lodging there; yea, and finally escaped not without many bitter threatnings, and blasphemous words. Now, one reason why *Riches* and *Poverty* did not receive *True Godliness*, was, because *Consideration* dwelt with neither of them, who, being a grave counsellor, might possibly have given them better advice, than to deny entertainment to so estimable a friend. *Godliness*, after this, began to be at a stand which way to travel next; but hearing of one *Youth*, who lived not far off, he resolved to see whether he might not get a dwelling with him, because he was one that his commission particularly directed him to visit.

## CHAPTER V.

*Godliness applies to Youth, who pleads various Excuses, and at last utterly declines receiving him at present.*

NOT discouraged with the mal-treatment from which he had just escaped, *Godliness* hastens to *Youth*, whom he perceives enjoying himself in the shade of a beautiful grove, attended by his companions.



With difficulty could he obtain any notice; and when he did, *Youth* looked on him with some rudeness, and inquired, with visible resentment at the intrusion, who he was.

*Godli.* Your true friend and well-wisher, *Godliness*. I have come to offer my company and services, and am ready not only to teach you how best to enjoy this present life, but the only method of escaping the awful evils of the world to come.

*Youth.* Dear Sir, I am not so ignorant of the sources of delight as to need your counsel; and as to the future dangers, of which you speak, I mean to guard against them. And beside, do you think me a wicked reprobate? I mean to injure no one in my gaiety. My moral character is without a spot, I assure you. Go to the old cruel misers, and to thieves, and such wicked persons, and reform them; as for me, I have no need of you at present.

*Godli.* Aye, Sir, but you need my Master's righteousness, Rev. iii. 17, 18, and also a part in his kingdom; and these are some of those glorious commodities I have to bestow upon you, if you will entertain me.

*Youth.* Aye, there it is; I perceive I must entertain you, if I would have them: but I tell you plainly, your company does not suit my age. Sir, you will spoil all my pleasures, if I receive you. You will cause me also to abandon these dear friends and companions who rejoice my heart by their delightful society.

Now, those he called friends were *Pride, Wanton, Vain-Glory, Love-Lust, Ambition, Gay-Clothes, Gamester, Please-Friend, Time-Server, Scornful, Hate-Good, and Scoffer.*

*Godli.* Young man, believe me, those pleasures and delights upon which your heart is so much set are very hateful to God, and also abase your noble soul, which is of a sublime extraction. Farthermore, hear what wise Solomon saith, "Rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes. But know, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment." You will pay dear at last for all your sensual pleasures.

*Youth.* But for all you say, wise Solomon made trial of all the delights of the children of men before he condemned them; and so will I too, as far as I can.

*Godli.* It is true, Solomon did so; and doth he not, by the sad experience he had of them, tell you, "All was vanity and vexation of spirit?" Come, Son, you had better believe the poison in the cup is deadly, than taste of it.

*Youth.* Sir, pray speak no more; I have

not yet sowed all my wild oats; let me alone. In due time I shall send for you.

*Godli.* Let me rather persuade you to remember that "he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." Gal. vi. 8. You had better sow to the spirit. And now I will inform you what kind of crop you will have at harvest by sowing to the flesh.

*Youth.* Why, Sir, what crop shall I reap?

*Godli.* You are likely, in the first place, to reap in this world a crop of disappointment and regret, as the fruit of your folly and irreligion. Secondly, you will reap a crop of infamy and reproach; for "sin is the shame of any people." Prov. xiv. 34. And it will be a wonder if you reap not a crop of want and beggary too in the end. Thirdly, you will reap a crop of horrible and unsupportable guilt, Prov. xviii. 14, by which means your conscience will so torment you, that you will not be able to endure it, unless you go on in this ungodly course so long, that it is seared with a hot iron, and then you will reap a crop of all manner of foul and detestable pollution; yea, such corruption, that will cause God to loath your soul. Fourthly, you will reap also a crop of all the fearful plagues and curses that are in the book of God pronounced against wicked and presumptuous sinners, Deut. xxix. 19, 20, 21. And lastly, at the great and terrible day of judgment, you will reap a full crop of God's eternal wrath and vengeance; a crop of endless torments in hell-fire, Matt. xxv. 41. Now, if you like to gather in such a harvest, go on and sow your wild oats plentifully.

*Youth.* Sir, I intend to sow other seed hereafter; I desire only a little liberty in these my youthful days: if you should call at my door when I am old, I shall be willing to entertain you; nay, Sir, I do promise you, I will then open my doors to you.

*Godli.* Alas! my young friend, present promises to open hereafter to God and *True Godliness*, seldom end in real performance: he who promised to go and work in his master's vineyard, went not, Matt. xxi. 30. Such who put me off with promises to become godly hereafter, it is evident, purpose to be wicked for the present. Besides, do you know you shall live to be old? Or, if you should, that God will send me then to knock at your door? Nay, and let me tell you, if I should then visit you, I fear it will be to no purpose, because, Sir, you ripen apace already in wickedness, and sin is of a hardening nature. Evil habits are not easily changed; the Ethiopian may as soon change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as you may learn to do well, Jer. xiii. 23, and open to me, when you have been a long time accustomed to do evil: therefore open to me now.

*Youth.* Sir, you will raise my temper presently, if you leave not off your canting. You are, I am sure, a gentleman for whom few or none care. Have any of the rulers and nobles of the nations embraced you? John vii. 48. Why do you not see if they will entertain you?

*Godli.* Nay, pray be not offended with me; I seek your profit; I will do you no wrong. You shall not lose any thing in the end by me, though possibly you may have to part with something for my sake; but if you do, I will repay you again an hundred-fold in this world, Matt. xix. 29; and in the world to come you shall have life everlasting. And what though not many mighty, and not many noble ones do love me, or will entertain me, 1 Cor. i. 26, it is not because I do not deserve esteem from them, but because they are incensed against me by the devil, and are so in love with *Vice*, my mortal enemy. Sir, I am abused, and rendered very odious by wicked men, as if I were factious, restless, and seditious. Acts xxiv. 25. And this is the reason why I am so slighted and contemned.

*Youth.* Aye, and to speak the truth, I cannot believe but you are the cause of all the present discord, animosities, and confusions that are amongst us; for since you came into this country, what disputes, contentions, and distractions, have been here?

*Godli.* I and my children ever, I must confess, were thus censured and falsely accused, though never so stigmatized as now of late, Isa. viii. 18. Jerusalem of old was called a rebellious and bad city, because I dwelt in it; and my enemies said of old time, Sedition had been there, and that it was a great enemy to kings and governments, Ezra iv. 12, 15. But it is no marvel I am thus abused, considering my Lord and Master himself was loaded with like calumnies, John x. 20, being accused with sedition, and called an enemy to Cæsar likewise. But let not this discourage you from receiving me, for all these things are utterly contrary to my nature, and abhorred by me and all my good friends.

*Youth.* It will not be for my honor to give you a reception; I shall be derided and scoffed at, should I do it, and be looked upon as a foolish person: therefore pray depart.

*Godli.* What if you lose the honor of this world?—I will raise you to far greater: "For honor and riches are with Christ; yea, lasting riches and righteousness." Prov. viii. 18. John xii. 26. They that receive me, and serve Christ, God will honor.

*Youth.* Pray let me alone until another time, until I am a little older.

*Godli.* Sir, my Master commands you to "remember him now in the days of your

youth," Eccles. xii. 1, and to remember him, is to embrace me: and let me tell you, to reject me, is rebellion against him who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, John xii. 48. Shall not what he requires be done?

*Youth.* I have other business at present of greater concern than to attend on such a guest; take your answer, therefore, and be gone.

*Godli.* Do not mistake yourself. To receive me, and to lead a godly life, is business of the greatest concernment. Were you not made and sent hither on purpose to serve and honor your Creator, and not to live like an irrational being, and serve the enemy of all righteousness, as heretofore you have done? Isa. xliii. 21. Acts xvi. 27. If you do persist in these courses, be assured you will perish in hell at last.

Upon this the young gallant was in a great rage, and swore he would be revenged on him, and on all his friends, if he did not keep at a distance. And presently all his companions and attendants, mentioned before, stirred him up to fall upon *Godliness* immediately, and force him away. *Pride* swelled; *Vain-Glory* vaunted himself; and both bid him disdain the proposal *Godliness* had made. *Time-Server* and *Please-Friends* bid him mind what was the custom of the times, and do as other youth did. *Scornful* looked with contempt upon *True Godliness*; *Gamester*, set him to play at cards; *Love-Lust* enticed him to the abodes of infamy; *Scoffer* and *Scornful* jeered and derided him: nay, and not only so, but made base songs of him; and *Hate-Good* commanded them all to fall upon him, and banish him out of the world. And had it not been for fear of some neighbors, though they were but moral people, he had doubtless been utterly trodden down under their feet. But happily he escaped this time also, and got away, leaving the poor deluded *Youth* to himself, resolved to gratify his own sensual and luxurious appetite.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Godliness at the Door of Old-Age; the Reasons why he refused to entertain him.*

GODLINESS, being rejected both by *Riches*, *Poverty*, and *Youth*, resolved to see whether he might not be entertained by a certain decrepit and feeble person, called *Old-Age*, concluding with himself, that it was very probable his dear friend, *Consideration*, whom he had a long time sought for, might lodge in his house; for, said he, surely *Wisdom*, though he dwell not with *Riches*, *Poverty*, nor *Youth*, yet doubtless



he doth with the aged, Job xxxii. 7. He therefore made directly up to his door, where he knocked and called a considerable time without any answer; but at last *Old-Age* inquired who was at his door.

*Godli.* Your real friend, *True Godliness*, who would fain have a lodging with you.

*Old-Age.* *Godliness!* I have heard, I think, of you, but do not know you. Besides, I am not able to rise up from my chair to let you in. I have such a weak and crazy body, and am so full of pains and aches, that I have enough to do to sustain my own infirmities: pray come another time: do not now trouble me.

*Godli.* Alas! Father, you may not live another day; death may seize you before to-morrow morning, Prov. xxvii. 1. Why should you put me off? I came to you when you were young, and then you stated that you could not welcome me, because you had not sowed all your wild oats, and you were too young, and I was not a fit companion for *Youth*. Moreover, you then said, when you were old, you would let me in; and will you put me off now too?

But all the means *Godliness* could use were of no avail; *Old-Age* was settled so on his lees, and had had such rebellious servants and children, that they would not suffer him to show *Godliness* the least favor, Jer. xlviii 11. The names of some of them were *Weary-Limbs*, *Dim-Eyes*, *Peevish*, *Hard-Heart*, *Impenitency*, *Self-Conceit*, *Enmity*, *Unbelief*, and *Ignorance*; with many more of the like sort. The first I named were his own natural offspring, and somewhat younger than the rest. *Hard-Heart* he had nourished and fed continually from his youth, for *Godliness* found him at his house when he gave him a visit in the prime of his days; but now he was grown very stout, stubborn, and obdurate. This fellow made *Old-Age* not to regard at all the threats of God. And he was so void of pity, that he stirred *Old-Age* up to stifle poor *Conscience*, who kept his accounts, and at every turn to tread him under foot, if he had at any time so much light and power as to tell him of his debts, viz. what abundance of abominable sins he had committed against God; and not only so, but not to regard or pity the sad estate of his own soul. Nor did he concern himself with the low condition of God's church, but would curse and swear, and tell many stories and lies, and now and then be drunk, notwithstanding he was even ready to drop into hell! And all this comes to pass through the evil nature of this *Hard-Heart*, and his companions *Enmity* and *Unbelief*.

These three had also bred up another graceless inmate as bad as themselves,

one *Impenitency*; so that all that could be said to him by *Godliness*, and his servant, *Theology*, concerning the detestable nature of sin, and his miserable condition, yet he could not be brought to repent, nor to let one tear fall for his sins; so that that word of the blessed apostle was made good in him, "But after thy hard and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds." Rom. ii. 5, 6.

*Ignorance* was in *Youth's* house, and in *Poverty's* house, but not such a sottish *Ignorance* as seemed to be with *Old-Age*; for he affirmed that God did not trouble himself to take notice of what men did below, but was taken up about high matters in heaven; neither indeed could he believe that he saw through dark clouds. "Is not God," saith he, "in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are! And how doth God know? Can he judge through the dark clouds? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven." Job xxii. 12, 13, 14.

Moreover, he and *Unbelief* told him that he had as good a heart as the best; and that to hear and read some good prayers, and to mean well, was godliness enough for him. Besides, they would not suffer him to believe that God ever cast any of his creatures, whom he had made, into a lake of fire and brimstone. Nay, he was almost persuaded by them to believe there was no hell at all. As it regarded heaven, they told him there might be some such state, and that though he might not have so elevated a place there as some men, yet he should get in among the crowd and find some corner, for heaven was a very spacious place.

*Self-Conceit* caused him to think so highly of himself, that notwithstanding all that *Godliness* could say to confute *Ignorance* and *Unbelief*, he did not regard it all; for he said, they were all fools who troubled themselves about sin and another world; and that he who had lived so many years, understood better, and knew what to do; and bid *Godliness* cease his importunity; for, said he, every tub must stand upon its own bottom; and sure I am, God will not cast away an old man. I was born a Christian, and made a child of God, a member of Christ, an heir of the kingdom of heaven by my baptism, and would you persuade me to think my condition is bad at last? No, Sir, I understand what religion is very well. Do not mistake yourself, for I do not see that I am much pressed by our parson to strict godliness; but to come now and then to hear prayers, and receive the sacrament,



and this I am resolved to do. And though my condition is considered so bad by you, I am sure there are many in our parish, and good churchmen, as bad if not far worse than I.

*Godliness* by this time perceived *Old-Age* was so hardened in his sins, and trained up by *Ignorance* for so long a time, that it was next to an impossibility to think the evil habits he had got by being accustomed so long to those ways of *Vice* and *Ungodliness*, should ever be changed; and considering he was become so unteachable and self-conceited, was resolved to leave him, not thinking it was worth his time to wait longer at his door, nor give any reply to those base bred children and servants he kept in his house; for *Peevish* made him so snappish that there was no speaking to him; remembering that word of the prophet, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may you, who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well." Jer. xiii. 23. Yet he could not but take pity on him, considering his age; therefore he gave him the following general reply, and departed.

*Godli.* Father *Old-Age*, it grieves me to find you thus blind, and hardened in your evil ways; and the rather, because I see your enemy, death, now standing with his sword drawn here at your door, ready to enter in, and hell is at his heels. Alas! death, who now shakes his sword over your head, will soon sheath it in your heart. What will you do when you come to stand before God in judgment? There is but a little airy breathing between you and eternal burning: it is better to have your eyes open on earth, to bewail your sins, than to have your eyes open in hell to bewail your sufferings; though you will not let me in now, who would make you happy, yet you will not be able very long to keep death out, who will make you eternally miserable. Psal. lxxxix. 84. It is sad you will not see your danger, till you cannot escape it. As I now stand at your door, saying, Open to me, but am not let in; so you ere long will say, "Lord, Lord, open to me;" but you will be kept out, for none but those who receive me into their hearts on earth, will be received by Christ hereafter into heaven. Those who condemn *Godliness* here, will be condemned for their *Ungodliness* hereafter. Your poor, deluded soul, who thinks its state so good without grace and regeneration, will find it had ere long, under wrath and condemnation: "For except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 3. This is the day of God's long-suffering, but quickly will come the day of your long-suffering; for he whose mercy you have abused, while you live,

will let out his vengeance against you to eternity when you die. Thess. i. 8, 9.

Much to the same purpose he spake to him, and with deep sorrow left him to perish in his sins!

## CHAPTER VII.

*True Godliness, after this, travelled towards the city Jerusalem, near to which was a small village called Religion, in which dwelt Mr. Legalist, at whose door he knocked. The cause why he did not entertain him.*

GODLINESS, having hitherto barely escaped with his life, thought it now full time to leave those parts, where he had long travelled up and down, and suffered many hardships, (being generally slighted and contemned by all where he came) and to travel into some other country, amongst people (if he could find such) who were not so abominably wicked, or at least not such visible and open enemies to him as others were; and he thought it might be best to bend his course towards Jerusalem; but before he entered Salem, he perceived a village lying near the city, and the name of that town he understood was Religion; he therefore turned aside thither, and being informed that Mr. *Legalist* lived at the town's end, near Mount Sinai, he resolved to give him a visit, and immediately came to his door, where with great earnestness he knocked; and he, being within, spake to this purpose:

*Legal.* Who is at my door?

*Godli.* Sir, a stranger to you, though your very good friend, and one who would gladly have a lodging in your house.

*Legal.* What is your name?

*Godli.* Sir, my name is *True Godliness*.

*Legal.* I wonder much you should say *True Godliness* is a stranger to me, or I to him. He has long been a cherished member of my family. Do be gone, you must be an impostor.

*Godli.* Sir, it is a mistake; you have been greatly deceived.

*Legal.* What, do I not know *True Godliness*? This is strange! Do not he and I converse together every day?

*Godli.* Sir, it is indeed true that there are one or two persons who go sometimes by my name; and it is very probable you may be acquainted with one of them. Pray what are his manners? What instructions does he give you? For by these I shall know who your guest is.

*Legal.* Why, Sir, he teaches me to keep the commandments of God, to lead a right-

eous life, to do unto all men as I would they should do unto me.

*Godli.* O! Sir, that is my friend and honest neighbor *Morality*, one that I love very well, and I am sure it is your great ignorance to take him for me: he will not say his name is *True Godlinss*; for though in some things we are a little alike, I teaching the same doctrine you mention, yet we differ exceedingly in many things. First, we agree in saying you must keep God's commands. Secondly, he says that you must be righteous; I say the like. And, thirdly, that you should do unto all men as you would have them do to you; I say the very same, it being my Master's own doctrine. But we differ prodigiously on other points. He teaches you to seek justification by doing; but I, by believing; he by keeping the law; I by God's free grace, through the merits of Christ.

*Legal.* What is that, friend, you say? Are we not required to keep the law of God?

*Godli.* Sir, you ought to keep it as far as you are able, though not as it is the law of works, but as it is the law of Christ. You must not look for righteousness and justification by your keeping the law in any sense, (it was on this very block the Jews of old stumbled, and were broken in pieces,) because you have sinned, and daily break the law; and the least transgression thereof exposeth you to the wrath and curse of God.

*Legal.* I know I cannot perfectly keep the law, but I will do, by the help of God, what I can. And wherein I, through weakness, transgress the law, God is merciful, and I trust he will forgive me.

*Godli.* Forgive you! Why, he hath said, "He will in no wise clear the guilty." Moreover, "What the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that all mouths may be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God." Rom. iii. 19.

*Legal.* What do you say? Will not God forgive me, who am a penitent person? Oh! what a horrible doctrine is this! I believe he will not forgive the impenitent, and such guilty ones, that the Scriptures speak of.

*Godli.* Mistake not, Sir, all are guilty; all have broken the law or first covenant; all are under sin and wrath. It is not your repentance that will do; God will not forgive any man, let him be who he will, except he believes in Jesus Christ, and takes hold of the merits of his blood. "By the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified." God will not pardon your sins, notwithstanding your repentance, as a simple act of his mercy, unless you fly to him through Christ, who hath satisfied his justice; for

what you say renders Christ's glorious undertaking void and unnecessary; and so casts a great reflection upon the wisdom of God, in sending his Son into the world.

*Legal.* How do you make that appear?

*Godli.* Do you not say you will do what you can to keep the law; and wherein you transgress, God will through his mercy forgive you? Now, if God accepts of your obedience in keeping the law, and forgives all your deviations, as a simple act of his mercy, and that hereby you are justified and accepted by him; why then did he send Jesus Christ into the world, to die the cursed death of the cross? For if by this way righteousness and salvation are attainable, it is evident Christ is dead in vain; for could not God have done all this if Christ had never come? Thou art a wretched creature; look to Christ, or thou art undone.

*Legal.* Nay, Sir, do not mistake me neither; I do not think my righteousness justifies me any otherwise than through the merits of Christ.

*Godli.* Sir, you err exceedingly; it is not your personal righteousness, no, not through Christ's merits, that justifies, but the merits of Christ, received by faith alone. Alas! now you discover indeed what a great stranger you are to me: you are one of those just men, it seems, who never went astray, or righteous ones that Christ came not to call. Alas! I always declare and testify, that all men must perish without faith in Christ. Doth not the text positively say, "He that believeth not shall be damned?" Mark xvi. 16. "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him." John iii. 36. Sir, "there is no other name given under heaven, whereby men can be saved." Acts iv. 12. "Another foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. iii. 11. Come, let me in, and I will expel those dark clouds, and teach you another kind of doctrine. I will help you to be holy, and not to depend upon it; to be righteous, but not to trust in it; I will lead you to say, "In the Lord have I righteousness;" and that he is made of God "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." But I forewarn you, if I come in, you must turn out those helpless and unprofitable servants you have kept.

*Legal.* What servants would you have me turn out?

*Godli.* Mr. *Mis-Belief*, and *Good-Opinion*, and *Self-Righteousness* you must turn out. Beside, you must also remove your dwelling farther off from Mount Sinai; for look about you, be gone quickly, for I see dreadful flashes of lightning, the mountain seems to be all on fire: and hark! do you



not hear it thunder, *Legalist*? God is angry with you, Sir; there is no seeing his face but through a Mediator.

*Legal.* What, must I turn my tried servants out of doors?

*Godli.* There is no help for it; you must cast out *Blind-Zeal*, *Ignorance*, and *Legal-Heart*, too, for these are dangerous persons; and in their room place *True-Zeal*, *Right-Faith*, *Broken-Heart*, and *Good-Understanding*. Nay, Sir, and let me tell you, if you do not quickly expel these out of your tabernacle, you will be undone, and perish in your sins; for notwithstanding your great hopes of heaven, they will soon thrust you down into hell; for "publicans and harlots go into heaven before you."

Upon this he began to be very angry, and gave *True Godliness* hard words, calling him *Libertine* and *Antinomian*, characters that *Godliness* greatly detests. Moreover *Legalist* told him he was sure he whom he had already received into his house was *True Godliness*, and he but an impostor. Finally, in a great rage he bid him begone from his door.

Upon this, *Godliness* perceiving *Legalist* was so wedded to his own opinion, that there was no hope of getting entertainment in his house, left him, and travelled a little farther into the town, being told that several persons lived not far off, who were thought to be sound Christians.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Godliness encounters a Man of strange Countenance, who it appears was an Antinomian.*

As *Godliness* passed on from the house of this self-righteous professor, he was accosted by a haughty looking person who seemed greatly disposed to dispute upon religion.

The matter of good works was soon broached, and with no small self-confidence he rattled over his threadbare story.

*Godliness.* I am afraid you are not sound. Pray, friend, what do you believe about justification?

*Antinomian.* I believe all the elect are personally and actually justified from eternity, and beloved by the Lord with a love of complacency, before they believe, even as they are after being called and sanctified.

*Godli.* You certainly are very corrupt in your judgment, and hold a doctrine Jesus Christ abhors. Besides, you talk as if you understand not common sense: can any be actually and personally justified before they actually and personally exist?

*Anti.* I believe the elect were all actually justified from eternity.

*Godli.* What, actually and personally justified, and yet actually and personally condemned, at one and the same time! This is strange. Adam, for his first sin, fell under wrath and condemnation, and being a public person, all partake of his corrupt nature; and thus are children of wrath, as well as by their own actual transgressions, and so abide until they are transplanted out of that dead root, and are implanted into Jesus Christ, and partake of a vital union with him. John iii. 18, 36. Can righteousness be imputed and sin charged upon a person at the same time? Or are unbelievers justified persons? To justify or acquit a sinner, implies he was before guilty and condemned; and thus it was with all believers, before they were united to Christ, as the word of God testifieth, and so doth the Holy Ghost also, by conviction, when it first works upon the hearts and consciences of sinners; therefore your notion charges the Holy Ghost with being a liar.

*Anti.* I tell you, I like you not, nor do I regard what you say. I am for free grace; God sees no sin, nor ever did, in his elect, nor need they mourn for sin, nor indulge any doubt; nay, though they are ungodly, their state is good, say what you will.

*Godli.* You are such as expose me and my friends to reproach; your doctrine, alas! tends to looseness and ungodliness. I also hear that your preachers never pray for pardon of sin; and also tolerate ignorant people to rend themselves from the true churches of Christ, and will hardly allow any to be true ministers but themselves. Those of your communion I see are just like the church of Laodicea; that is, "increased in goods, and have need of nothing" in their own sight, not poor in spirit. This is manifest, because your haughty preachers are so full, that they need not confess their sins, nor ask pardon of God.

The case of this man was so hopeless that *Godliness* would not stand to dispute with him, and therefore passed on.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Godliness came to Mr. Formalist's door, who bid him very welcome; but he suspecting his integrity, and that he harbored divers grand enemies of his, particularly one Hypocrisy, hesitated to go in. How Hypocrisy came to be discovered. Formalist at last refused to entertain True Godliness.*

*GODLINESS* being informed that there was another great professor living in this village of Religion, he thought it was convenient



for him to see whether he might not get a lodging in his house, because he was a man whom all the neighborhood said had a great love to *True Godliness*: nay, many verily thought he had for a long time taken up his lodging with him, and wondered when they heard him ask for his house, (for by that means they perceived he was a stranger to him,) but it was a considerable time before he could find where he dwelt; for it appeared he was called by another name, viz. *Devotion*. But at last, coming by one man's door, and by another, he heard a man at prayer, and he spake so loud, that all who walked along the street, might hear him: he then concluded, it was very probable he might dwell there; and to his door he came and knocked.

*Formal.* Who's there?

*Godli.* My name is *True Godliness*.

*Formal.* *True Godliness!* Pray, Sir, come in: there is none in all the world I love more dearly; the best room in all my house is at your service. Pray where have you been, and what news do you hear? Are the Imperialists and Turks at peace, and all things adjusted? How go things in the world? How doth it fare with our poor Protestant brethren in France? What news from Scotland? When will the times be better?

Many such questions he asked, and professed abundance of respect to *True Godliness*, and (as you heard) bid him come in, but never offered to open the door. *Godliness* was grieved to find him so full of words; but more especially, because he took up his time, and troubled his mind so much after news; nay, and that too, when he should open to *True Godliness*, and just upon ending his devotion; yet nevertheless, *Godliness* very mildly answered him to this purpose:

*Godli.* Sir, as to your first question, I answer, I have wandered about from place to place, to seek entertainment, I mean, a fit and convenient lodging for a little time, for it will not be long ere I have done travelling; but I am fallen into such an evil and perilous time, that scarcely any one will show me the favor to take me in, and make me welcome. *Riches, Poverty, Youth and Old Age*, have all refused me, and shut their doors against me; and since I came into these parts, and particularly to your town, where every one concluded I should be most kindly embraced, the very first man I came to, hath denied me entertainment; and not only so, but called me hard names, and declared I was a vile impostor.

*Formal.* What man is that? pray inform me.

*Godli.* My friend, to answer your question, the man is called *Legalist*.

*Formal.* O! Sir, there is not a man in

all this town more haughty, proud, and conceited than he; he concludes, I warrant you, that he hath godliness enough already; he makes, in truth, the whole of religion to consist in principles of morality. I have heard him say that if a man do but square his life as near as he can according to the law of the ten commandments, not being guilty of gross sins, nor wilfully break any precepts of the two tables, he shall be saved. He never considers all the while the necessity of faith and regeneration; and although he trusted thus to his own righteousness, he is a very worldly, proud, and passionate person; nay, and he himself confesseth, he is a sinner, and yet would be justified by the law; whereas you know the least sins, lusts of the heart, and evil thoughts, are a breach of it; and the smallest breach is death and eternal wrath, without a compensation made to offended justice; and none was able to do this but Jesus Christ; and none have the blessing of his undertaking, but such as believe.

*Godli.* You seem to have a good understanding, and can talk well; but how comes it about, you let me stand all this while at your door? Is this your kindness to me? What avails your knowledge and parts, except you entertain *True Godliness*?

*Formal.* Dear Sir, have I not opened to you already? you are in my affections, and I will further open to you; pray come in, and do as you please in my house.

*Godli.* I fear you mistake; you have opened to me in one respect, but not in another: you seem to like my form, but not my power; my external rites, but not my internal life. I am indeed received into your head, but not into your heart. The truth is, I suspect you.

*Formal.* Suspect me, Sir! for what?

*Godli.* That you have one or two implacable enemies of mine hid secretly in your house.

*Formal.* Who; I, Sir! God forbid I should hide any enemies of *True Godliness*! Who are they? Pray tell me their names? They shall be instantly dismissed.

*Godli.* *Old-Man, Carnal-Affections*, and *Hypocrisy*.

*Formal.* As touching *Old-Man*, there is no Christian can be quite rid of him; God forbid I should show him any countenance; and as to *Carnal-Affections*, in this you mistake, for my affections are spiritual. But why should you think I harbor *Hypocrisy* in my house? I will assure you, there is none in all the world I hate more than that base fellow, for I know God hates him; and shall I show countenance to him? Lord, far be it from me.

*Godli.* Nay, *Formalist*, be not too confident; it is not your bare denial of it which is sufficient to acquit you of the suspicion I

have of you upon this account. I will see if I cannot find him out; for you have a certain officer in your house, who I am sure can make a righteous decision, if he be not basely corrupted and blinded by your pretending so much love and zeal to seeming holiness. I know he will not flatter any man, but speak according to his light and knowledge impartially at all times. Sir, I will appeal to him.

*Formal.* What is his name?

*Godli.* His name is *Conscience*.

Upon this, *Conscience* was called, and inquired of after this manner:

*Godli.* *Conscience*, I require you in the fear of God, to answer me a question or two concerning your master: Doth he not secretly lodge and hide one in his house, called *Hypocrisy*? For I very much suspect him herein to be guilty; what do you say?

*Con.* Sir, if you please to give me his character, or give me some certain signs of his behavior and properties, whereby I may know him, I will faithfully discover all that I understand as touching this matter.

*Godli.* *Conscience*, I thank you; you speak like an honest man, and indeed I have always found you impartial according to your light. I will then give you such a description of this subtle and deceitful enemy of mine, that you cannot well mistake; and this I shall do by propounding a few questions to you.

First. Sir, was your master ever thoroughly wounded in the sense of sin, being convinced of its ugly and abominable nature; there is nothing more hateful to God than that; not only convinced of the evil which attends it, or is the fruit of it, but that cursed evil there is in it, being utterly contrary to the holy and pure nature of God, a breach of his law; and that which hath made a breach between God and man, defaced the image of God in him, and is the cause of all that abominable enmity that is in his heart against God, and me his blessed offspring; and also makes a man in love with the ways of the devil; nay, to be like the devil, conformable to him, and to do his will.

Secondly. Is there no one sin that secretly he loves and lives in (the evil habit never being broken)? Have you not found him now and then telling a lie for his advantage, or telling tales or stories, adding to them, to please the company, or to excuse himself, when accused, that so he may gain credit? Is he not sometimes overtaken by drunkenness? Is he not proud, minding more the honor, praise, and applause of men, in what he doth in religion, than the praise of God? Is he not covetous? Does he give according to his ability to the poor? Does he not rob God to serve

the world? I mean, neglect hearing God's word, and other indispensable duties, for worldly profit, and so prefer the world above the word? Does he never in trading, offend you, by speaking better of his commodities than they deserve? Is not the world more in his love and affections than God and Jesus Christ? Does he always give just weight and measure, and not take unlawful profit? Does he not make gain of *Godliness*, and use religion as a cloak to cover his secret sin? Does he concern himself for the interest of the gospel, and, by his open-heartedness, show upon that account, he loves Christ above son or daughter? Is he resolved to part with all, rather than to sin against God, and to offend you his *Conscience*? Does he see more evil in the least sin, than in the greatest suffering?

Thirdly. Does he desire as much to have his sins mortified as pardoned; to be made holy here, as well as happy hereafter? Is he as much in love with the *work* of holiness as with the *wages* of holiness? Does he love the word of God because of the purity of it? Is he willing to bear the cross as well as wear the crown; to be with Christ in his temptations here, as well as with Christ in his exaltations hereafter? To live to God on earth, as well as to live with God in heaven?

Fourthly. Is he the same in private as in public? Does he not rest satisfied upon the bare performance of duty, not minding whether he hath met with God or not? Does he pray in private as if men saw him; and in public, as knowing God sees him? Does not his satisfaction more lie in his asking of God, than in his receiving from God? Does he not seek more for suitable words in prayer, than for a suitable heart? Does he not study more for acute expressions to affect the hearts of others, than to meet with powerful impressions upon his own? Does he not lengthen his prayers before others, and hurry them over in private? Does he as much seek after what he needs from God, as that which he needs of the world?

Fifthly. Can he bear reproofs kindly for his faults, and take them patiently; nay, and esteem him his greatest friend, who deals most candidly with him? Is he ready to take shame to himself, and give glory to God? Can he be contented in the way of well doing, though he meet with little sensible comfort from God, or outward respect from saints?

Sixthly. Does he as much desire to have his heart filled with grace, as his head with knowledge? Does he take as much care to make the glory of God his end, as the command of God his ground, in what he does?

Seventhly. Is he not more severe in press-



ing the smaller concerns of religion, than in urging the greater. Does he not require those duties of others, which he himself is loth to practice? Is he not more curious to know other men's conditions than his own?

*Eighthly.* Has he received a whole Christ with a whole heart? 1. A whole Christ comprehends all his offices, and a whole heart comprehends all his faculties. Has he received Christ, not only as a priest to die for him, but also as a prince to rule over him? Does he obey all God's precepts, as well as believe all God's promises? 2. As to his faculties, his understanding may be somewhat enlightened, but his affections may be carnal, and his will adverse to *True Godliness*; is his heart divided? Come, *Conscience*, I do now command you, in the presence of the great and dreadful God, who searches all hearts, to make a righteous decision; tell me plainly, is my enemy *Hypocrisy* here or not? By these hints you may easily know him.

*Con.* Sir, I must confess *Hypocrisy* is here; now I have found him out; nay, Sir, and he hath hid himself in his house ever since he came to live in this town of *Religion*. His greatest care has been to keep his name from being reproached by men. Should I tell of those lusts which he harbors in his heart, and what favor he shows to that old man (you mentioned before,) I should quite shame him. He prays, hears and reads, but I have often found him very weary of these duties; nay, Sir, he would seldom pray at all, were it not to quiet me; besides, he performs them with a sad, cold, dead, carnal, and lifeless spirit. He cares much for the small things of religion, but neglects the more weighty; nay, there is one thing more I will state; as he does not love strict *Godliness* himself, so his heart is ready to rise against such who outdo him. Sir, I plainly perceive, he is a mere dissembler, yet he would be thought as religious a man as any in the town. I find him much abroad, finding faults in others, or espying the mote that is in his brother's eye, but he never perceives the beam that is in his own; nay, and he is ready to fall out with many good Christians, because they will not follow him in habit, mode, and gesture, &c. In a word, most of those black marks of *Hypocrisy*, at which you hinted, I find in him.

*Godli.* Say no more; I see I was not mistaken. Now *Formalist*, how can you pretend kindness to me, and thus secretly entertain one of my worst enemies? Sir, it is you who has brought so great a reproach upon this poor town *Religion*, and on all its inhabitants; nay, and it is through your means I am so vilified and condemned by *Ignorance*, for he is ready to conclude,

that all my friends and true favorites are such as yourself, viz. mere loose and formal hypocrites. Oh! you are like to be undone and perish forever, unless you soon turn this enemy of mine out of doors; for I expect no other result but that you will in a little time fall into apostacy; but should you die first, yet assure yourself you will be lost; for hell is prepared for such as you are. You are in the worst condition of all men; for the wicked hate you, because you *pretend* so much love to *Religion* and *Godliness*; God also, because you have not real, *only pretended* love to them, being not sincere and upright in your profession.

*Formalist* at this began to be very angry, being greatly offended at *True Godliness*; for he could not endure to see his condition depicted in this manner, nor to hear of his present or future misery, being persuaded by Mr. *Vain-Hope*, *Unbelief*, and *Good Opinion*, to think his condition might be safe enough. However *Vain-Hope* told him, though at present his state might be doubtful, yet he should have many days on earth, and that he might repent, and set all things right before he died; whose word and promise he adventured to take, and so bade *True Godliness* adieu; and no man's state in all his travels did he indeed more lament than that of blinded, hopeless *Formalist*.

## CHAPTER X.

*Godliness, travelling farther into the Town (called Religion,) saw many People who had been great professors, retiring from the Town as fast as they could. In the discourse he had with one of them, the nature and danger of Apostacy is described.*

*GODLINESS* had no sooner left *Formalist's* door, and gone a little farther into the town of *Religion*, than he espied a great number of people hasting out as fast as possible; nay, he observed some of them ran, though others went slowly. At first he wondered what occasioned this commotion, because the town was a little before supposed to be as safe and honorable a place to dwell in, as any in all the country, and had as great and glorious privileges belonging to it; but upon inquiry he was told, there was a number of lions, evening wolves, and other evil beasts (which had for a long been shut up in their dens) getting out; and, having a great while been kept without prey, they were afraid they should be torn in pieces.

*True Godliness* at this seemed so deep concerned, that he could not let them pass without speaking to them; and observing that one of them looked like a sober man,

though he hung down his head, as if he had been ashamed, resolved to have a little discourse with him. To him he thus addressed himself.

*Godli.* Sir, What is the reason you leave this town, and haste away so fast? When you first took up your dwelling here, did you not intend to abide in it as long as you lived?

*Apostate,* (for that it seems was his name.) Truly, Sir, I did intend it; I had a great love for this poor town, but I must now remove out, and be gone.

*Godli.* Why must you? Is there a necessity laid upon you to quit this place, this honorable town of *Religion*?

*Apost.* Sir, I shall be destroyed else, for the walls of late are gone much to decay; I do not see that safety to reside here as formerly: besides, they say there are a great number of lions, wolves, and other beasts of prey, breaking out upon us, and I am afraid, if I should escape with my life, yet having a few sheep and lambs, they will devour them: truly, Sir, I do it to save what I have; yet I wish very well to the place.

*Godli.* I am heartily sorry that you indulge such fears; let me persuade you to return, and rest in this town. Sir, do not fear those lions; for God hath said, "He will break the teeth of the lions, the old lion, and the lions' whelps." Job iv. 10. But what though they should destroy your substance, is not your soul worth more than all the world? Mat. xxvi. 26. Come, go back again with me, and I will dwell with you, and be a sure defence to you, so that you will not be hurt, let lions, wolves, and devils too, do what they can. My name is *True Godliness*. Sir, I have saved many thousands from ruin in as great danger as you can be.

*Apost.* Sir, there will be no safe living for me. I must quit the place, the town is besieged.

*Godli.* What though it is besieged, God is able to defend it, and will be a wall of fire about it. But, Sir, if you proceed, I fear there will be no end to your wanderings. You must go far indeed to find a place as safe as the city you are leaving.

*Apost.* Sir, do not mistake me; I do not intend to go far, and am fully determined to return again when the danger is over: at present I will go but a little way out of town.

*Godli.* Sir, you will show yourself to be a traitorous and hypocritical person, if you leave this town in its distress. If the danger be great which attends it, you had the more need to abide in it, to strengthen and encourage the poor inhabitants. Pray do not show so base and cowardly a spirit. What is this less than to betray the town

to enemies? Is not the strength of any place the people? Besides, your flying encourages the adversaries; for by this means they may think to frighten all out, and then with much ease take the town, and utterly destroy it. Beside, you weaken the hands, and grieve the hearts, of all true Christians, whose chief treasure lies in the town, and cannot be removed; and it being also their spiritual native place, they resolve to abide in it to the last, let what will come. You say you intend to return again when the danger is over. What dangers you see above others, to move you to quit the town, I know not; but let me tell you, few who leave from fear of human loss or danger, return again. You say you intend to go but a little way; alas! you cannot tell where you shall stop. When once you desert God's gracious protection; you may go on to atheism, or any thing. Come, go back; let me save you from a fatal fall.

*Apost.* Sir, I retain the same principles that I formerly held, and my love is the same to the town as it ever was.

*Godli.* Poor man! You own the principles of *True Religion*, and yet cleave to vanity and sin. The three worthies of old, by your doctrine, might have retained faith and right principles of the true God in their hearts, and yet have bowed down to the golden image, and so needed not to have exposed themselves to the fiery furnace. Nay, by this doctrine, who need suffer persecution? Besides, it renders all the martyrs of old, mere fools and madmen. What do you say? Will you return? My company, it may be hoped, will allure you.

*Apost.* No, Sir, I have formerly had your company, and do not find you a necessary companion: besides, the town is sadly divided; those who love you do not agree.

*Godli.* Nay, Sir, what though the town is divided? It is my great grief to see it; but you had the more need to abide in it, to do what you can to persuade the divided inhabitants to unite in affection. Come, humble yourself before God for this great sin, and let us dwell together now, and thou shalt abide secure, notwithstanding the divisions within, and the troubles without, and have sweet peace and inward joy. What dost thou say?

*Apost.* Sir, say no more. I am resolved to be gone.

*Godli.* Well, since I see I cannot persuade you to return, but that you are resolved to leave *Religion*, and not receive *True Godliness*, I will tell you what your present state is, and what your future portion is like to be.

*Apost.* Pray, Sir, do not detain me; I must pass on.



*Godli.* I cannot let you go till I show you plainly your condition and prospects. Let me solemnly warn you of several deeply interesting things.

First, It appears, as I hinted before, that you have apostatized from Christ.

Secondly, You are, it is to be feared, forsaken of God, and left to yourself.

Thirdly, Either God will set *Conscience* against you, to torment you, (as he did upon Francis Spira) or else wholly give you up to your own heart's lust, to walk in your own counsel.

Fourthly, Your sin tends towards the sin against the Holy Ghost, that shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come; for you have been a person much enlightened, and now wilfully cast off God and religion. Pray read these scriptures, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Heb. x. 26—28: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses."

Fifthly, Jesus Christ will be ashamed of you at the last day, when he comes in the glory of the Father, with all his Holy Angels. Mark viii. 38.

Sixthly, Those who set their hands to the plough, and look back, are not fit for the kingdom of heaven, Luke ix. 62; nor will God's soul take pleasure in them.

Seventhly, You are like to have the most miserable place in hell. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." Rev. xiv. 10.

Eighthly, Remember the fearful end of such persons as you are, and what dreadful judgments God hath many times brought upon them. Besides, who will trust you? For you that are false to God, and to your own soul, will never be faithful to men. Come, that very way you think to save all, you may lose all. Besides, let me tell you, "Light is sown for the righteous, (though it is a dark time now,) and joy for the upright in heart." Nay, this precious seed is sown, as I could show you, in this present

dispensation; but I am in haste. What do you say to these things? Will you return?

*Apost.* I dare not, Sir, at present.

*Godli.* Well then, I see you love the world above Christ. I have but little more to say to you; but, Sir, what man in his right mind would, to avoid a few sparks, leap into the fire? or to save his hat, lose his head? Alas! whilst you seek to save your estates, you are likely eternally to lose your soul.

*Apost.* Well, Sir, trouble not yourself; farewell.

*Godli.* Adieu then, poor soul!

## CHAPTER XI.

*Godliness, coming to Thoughtful's house found there his friend Consideration whom he had a long time sought for. The great opposition Consideration met with.*

GODLINESS, being still not without hopes of finding *Serious Consideration*, in or near this place, knocked at a man's door who was come to dwell in the town *Religion*. It encouraged him to learn that while so many were leaving the place, this man sought it for a habitation. Now, this person formerly had been a very great enemy to *True Godliness*, having lived a loose and profuse life; and wasted his chief substance, though he had not really come to poverty, but seemed to be in middling circumstances. *Godliness* had not long knocked at his door, before he listened to him and spake within himself to this purpose: Who is this that is come to my door? Sure, said he, this is a voice different from any I ever heard in my life; and he doth not knock as others used to do. At last he cried out, Who is there? Who is it that is at my door?

*Godli.* Soul, Christ is at the door, and I, his noble and renowned offspring, *True Godliness*. Dost thou not remember that word, "Behold I stand at the door and knock?" &c. Rev. iii. 20. Sir, now I will ask you the like question; pray what is your name? I hope I am come to the right door.

He answered, I might very well be called *Prodigal*; for I have hitherto lived a very thoughtless and wicked life; but some call me of late *Thoughtful*, because, blessed be God, I am newly come to myself, by thinking upon my latter end, and the evil of my former ways.

*Godli.* But why dost thou choose to take up thy dwelling in this village now, when so many are going out?

*Thought.* Because I hear it is the best town in all the country to secure a man

from danger in evil times, provided I can but get a place in one of its strong holds in the heart of the town; for I have heard there is no safe dwelling at the town's end; no, nor any where in the suburbs. Besides, I was told lately, that the city where I have dwelt till now of late, will suddenly be destroyed. I do it indeed to save my own soul. I am, Sir, desirous to find out, if it may be, where true peace, happiness and eternal felicity is to be had; for I see they are not to be found in those paths I formerly walked; I mean, in the ways of *Riches, Honor*, and the *Pleasures* of this world.

*Godli.* I commend thee, honest *Thoughtful*; thou hast done wisely, and like a considerate man. Prithee, let me come in and dwell with thee, and thou wilt find this poor town the safest and most secure place in these dangerous times, in all the world. Sir, I have wandered about a long time, travelling from place to place, to seek for one to whom I bear much good will, but hitherto I have not found him; his name is *Consideration*.

Upon this *Consideration*, who it seems was within, whispered *Thoughtful* in his ear, and said, This is he that can alone made thee happy, if he be readily, sincerely, and heartily embraced and entertained. Is it not good for thee to muse upon the worth and excellent nature of thy soul? Thou art made a man, and therefore for a nobler and higher end and employment, surely, than eating and drinking, sleeping and playing, trade and secular affairs, and to enjoy sensual pleasures. This glorious soul which lies in thy bosom, is capable of knowing God, and of enjoying union and communion with him forever; and all those who suffer the honors, profits, and pleasures of the world to take up and engross their hearts, go astray, and err from the great end of their creation. Alas! nothing can fill the desires of thy soul, but God himself; thou hast hitherto suffered thy affections and desires to run after whatsoever thou couldst think might yield thee felicity; but it is evident there is nothing thou canst find here below, that can satisfy thy thirsty and ever craving soul. *Riches*, which sometimes thy heart hath been so much set upon, cannot be thy chief happiness; for they are uncertain, fleeting, and variable: and let a man have ever so much of them, yet if they are his chief delight, he is still craving and desiring more; so that it is as Solomon says, "He that desireth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver."

*Honors* are of like nature; and besides their vanity, they depend on the minds, will, and humors of men, who are changeable and inconstant.

*Pleasures* and voluptuousness are common to beasts as well as men, and, what is

worse, man has this additional disadvantage, that he endures remorse and discontent when the enjoyment is past.

Besides all this, *Consideration*, to induce him to open to *True Godliness*, bid him ask his soul in what state it now was, what it was doing, and whither it was going.

First, He endeavored to show him, that his soul was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, being under the law and curse of God, both in respect of original and actual sin; he having not yet closed with Christ, nor received *True Godliness*.

Secondly, Then as to what he was doing, he bid him see if he did not neglect that one thing needful. Have you, said *Consideration*, made religion your chief business since you came to live in this place? Have you not rather spent too much of your time about notions and speculations?

Thirdly, Whither are you going? Are you fit to die? Are you going the way to heaven? Surely that cannot be, unless you receive *True Godliness*; for I have heard that he consists in a right faith, as well as in an holy life. Oh! what cost, labor, pains, means, motives and arguments hath God used to make men sensible of the everlasting interest of their souls, and to engage them to a serious preparation for another world!

And this serious preparation must necessarily be a thorough work of regeneration, faith, and spotless conversation; for the nature of the means must ever be suitable and agreeable to the nature of the end; and heaven being a holy place, nothing but perfect holiness reigneth there; so it were impossible to enter into it hereafter, without progress be made in holiness here. And how can it be thought that a man should reach the highest step of a ladder without ascending the lowermost first? Who (said he) ever hoped for a crop of corn without sowing any, or expected to reap wheat, and sowed nothing but tares?

Besides these, *Consideration* dwelt much on the nature and holiness of God, his infinite hatred of sin, and great severity against all unbelieving and impenitent souls, together with the perfect knowledge he had of the heart, thoughts, and ways of the children of men. He endeavored to set in array the dreadful judgments, commands, threats, and precious promises of Jehovah.

He also brought to his mind the evil of sin, showing him what an abominable thing it was for a man to seek to please, obey, and do the will of the devil; and offend, disobey, and cross the will of God. Nay, he began to speak of the excellency of *True Godliness* also, and what he should gain by embracing him, and letting Christ, and the Spirit of Christ, Christ and the



Grace of Christ, Christ and *True Godliness*, reign in his heart. Nay, he had so much to say, that *Thoughtful* was so persuaded, as to be on the point of opening the door to *True Godliness*; but on a sudden, there was a great disturbance in the house, several fellows made a violent uproar, and poor *Consideration* was quite put down, and came near being utterly driven out of the house.

Those who made all this disturbance were some old servants, who not having been often called to duty of late, had grown apprehensive of losing their places, and justly feared the actual admission of *True Godliness* would now drive them all away. Their names were *Difficulty*, *Sloth*, *Deficiency*, *Security*, *Danger*, *Worldly Cares*, and *Carnal Company*. These and other wicked servants therefore combined to obstruct this great and important business of opening to *True Godliness*.

First, *Difficulty* spake after this manner: Sir, do not trouble yourself to study to find out these great mysteries of *Religion*, for it is a work too difficult for you to understand; there is nothing more mysterious; therefore to muse upon them would be lost labor.

*Sloth* told him it was laborious and toilsome work, and it would be great weariness to him, if *Difficulty* did not make it utterly impossible.

*Deficiency* said he was a man of a weak understanding, and those things were matters for the learned and most knowing men to study; nay, that many of them too, notwithstanding all their profound learning, proficiency, and skill in the languages, could hardly attain to the right knowledge of them.

*Security* endeavored to make it appear that his condition was very good and safe now, and that he had godliness enough, without troubling himself farther; and that he exceeded in holiness many men that had lived long in the town. Moreover, he told him, that he had followed the counsel of *Consideration* too much already.

*Danger* also spake several things. 1. That to give place to him, would let in his enemy *Melancholy*, which might endanger his life. Do you not see, said he, how uncomfortable this *Consideration* has made many brave men, causing them, by thinking on their latter end, to hang down their heads like a bullrush, fold their arms, and spend their days in tears and weeping? Harken not to him, for he will certainly infuse sad thoughts into your mind, and give you as it were nothing but gall and vinegar to drink.

2. He said, moreover, *Consideration* had made many men go beside themselves; and if he gave way to him about this affair, he would be distracted.

3. He insinuated also, that if he seriously mused upon this matter, or gave place to *Consideration*, so that *Godliness* were let in, the times were such he would be undone, and utterly ruined.

*Worldly-Cares* proved as great an enemy to *Consideration* as any of them; for he could not seriously muse nor think upon eternity, or the present condition his poor soul was in, he was so hurried in his mind about the affairs of this life: nay, no sooner at any season did he set himself to ruminate or ponder them in his mind, but *Worldly-Cares* would expel and drive such thoughts away.

*Carnal Company* and *Old Companions* greatly abused *Consideration*. They turned *Religion* and *Godliness* into a jest, and made the precepts of the gospel matter for raillery; and told him, that those men who seemed most serious, were the most seditious; and that their profession savored of nothing but pride, singularity, and hypocrisy.

Now, after they had spoken all their pleasure, and had silenced, nay, had quite routed poor *Consideration*, his mind was filled and hurried about many things, which *Godliness*, though not yet let in, overheard, and presently took them all up seriously and answered them one by one.

*Godli.* Honest *Thoughtful*, I would not have thee discouraged by those enemies thou has within, so as to slight *Consideration*, for he is thy very good friend, and as able a counsellor as most in this town. Moreover, very great inconveniencies have always followed those who have ignorantly slighted and contemned him; nay, I must tell thee, most of all those great miseries and heavy judgments that have befallen nations, cities, towns, churches, and particular souls, have been occasioned through their great neglect to hearken to *Consideration*. This was the cause of Israel's ruin of old. God, by his merciful providence, sent to them by his prophets, to warn them of their perilous estate and condition by reason of their sins, and not only told them of their imminent danger, but also revealed its true causes, and how they might easily provide remedies for the prevention of it; but they refused to lay it to heart, or give way to *Consideration* about it, which made Jehovah bewail their future misery after this manner: "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." Deut. xxxii. 29. Among other causes of their dismal calamities, none is more general, or oftener alleged, than the lack of *Consideration*. It is through this means, as by a common snare and deceit of the adversary, that most men fall into sin and reject me, and are holden also perpetually in Satan's bonds, to their de-

struction and perdition. Men seem determined to go on in their abominable lusts, pride, oppression, excess of riot, drunkenness, and all manner of debauchery, without considering what the end of these things will be. "Wo unto them," saith the Lord, "that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, and continue until night, till wine inflame them; and the harp and viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operations of his hands." Isa. v. 11. Their lusts and sensuality brought them to neglect *Consideration*. "For this cause is my people led away captive, &c. for they have no knowledge, no understanding of the time to come, no consideration of their danger." He that will not lend an ear to *Consideration*, renders himself little better than a brute: and what follows this folly and madness? "Therefore (saith the Holy Ghost,) hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure, and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it." Isa. v. 13, 14. "A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this, when the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish: it is that they should be destroyed forever." Psal. xcii. 6, 7. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Isa. i. 3.

*Negligence, Carelessness, Ignorance*, and absence of *Consideration*, as they brought Jerusalem down wonderfully, Lam. i. 9, so they have been the bane and ruin of wretched men in all ages, and will be yours, if you hearken to these evil enemies of your soul, and suffer *Consideration* to be expelled. Why at this day are there so many people who drink up iniquity as the ox drinks water; that commit all manner of sin, outrage, and injustice, treading down the poor, and contemning me, without remorse of conscience, or dread of God's wrath and fearful vengeance; but for the lack of considering that which is like to be their reward and punishment? Thus saith the Lord, "Consider your ways, consider your doings." Haggai. i. "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you." Psal. i. Aye, but they will not consider it, nor lay it to heart; they will not know in this their day, the things that belong to their peace, but inconsiderately put the evil day far away, and harden their hearts against God, provoking him to draw his sword, and cause his hand to take hold of judgment. Nothing doubtless can be more intolerable in the presence of the Almighty, than this iniquity, since he hath published

his law, declared his pleasure concerning godliness, charging all to bear it in their minds, to ponder it in their hearts, to study and meditate upon it both day and night, at home and abroad, when they rise up, and when they lie down, and to make it their thoughts continually. And oh! that men should ever, notwithstanding all this, contemn it, and make it no part of their thoughts, but rather avoid with care the knowledge thereof! God makes his complaint, and denounceth judgment, but no man (as the prophet Jeremiah sheweth) will enter into consideration, nor mind why the land mourns: none cry out, "What have I done!" All men, alas! are set upon their own courses, and run on with as great vehemence and fierce obstinacy, as the war horse rushes into battle, when he hears the trumpet sound a charge.

Come, *Thoughtful*, if thou adhere to *Consideration*, he will help thee to know God and thyself, and to find out the miserable condition thou and all men are in by nature. He is the key that openeth the door for me to enter the innermost room of thy heart; though it is true, he cannot open it without help. Nay, farthermore, he is the looking-glass, or rather the very eye of thy soul, whereby thou mayst view thyself, and see what a condition thy soul is in: hereby thou mayst espy thy debts, thy danger, thy duties, thy defects, thy safety, the course thou dost follow, the company thou dost keep; finally, the place and end to which thou drawest. He will give thee a view of all God's dealings with men since the creation of the world; the reason why God sent his Son, his gospel, his Spirit, his servants, and takes so much pains to bring men to salvation. By his help, thou mayst also find that all the means God uses to bring thee to a true sight and sense of sin and wrath, and to recover thee out of thy fallen estate, will prove vain and ineffectual to thee. Let, therefore, the consideration of the danger thou mayst escape through hearkening to him on the one hand, and the great advantage thou mayst receive on the other, together with the absolute necessity of cherishing him, if thou wouldst be happy, engage thee not to be discouraged to incline to him, nor regard what any speak against so good a servant as *Consideration*.

Give me admission, and I will bring thee acquainted with God and Jesus Christ; nay, help thee to a room in his heart, and lead thee into union and communion with him, and give thee much glorious light, and help thee to pardon for sin, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. I will make thee a son of God, give thee a place in the heavenly family, feed thee with the bread of life, clothe thee with glorious robes,



which sparkle like diamonds, and make thee rich; rich in faith, in knowledge, in experience, truly rich, always rich, eternally rich, yea, set a crown of glory upon thy head, and make thee an heir of heaven and earth. Thy renown also will be great; thou shalt have angels to guard thee, Christ to serve thee, God to honor thee. Oh! love him who would lead thee into Christ's bosom, and cause thee to sit in heavenly places; make thee to triumph with seraphims, and set down with thy glorified Redeemer upon the throne of God for evermore. Alas! men deal with me and my friend *Consideration*, as the inhabitants of Sodom did with the three heavenly messengers that entered into Lot's house, viz. quarrel with us, abuse us, and offer violence to us—who seek to preserve them from being consumed, and who whilst we are with them, stay the hand of heaven from falling upon them, the hand of the destroying angel, that they perish not, and endeavor to make them forever happy, possessing all true felicity, and free them from all misery. Does not every man desire that which is good? Was ever any man in love with torment? Is it not every one's interest to study how to prevent it? Why then surely *Consideration* cannot but have thy affection, unless thou dost condemn rivers of pleasures, inconceivable glory, even the inexhaustible riches of both worlds, and choost anguish, death, hell, and the lake that burneth with fire for thy portion.

As to the objections which *Difficulty* raises against thy compliance with my advice, they are soon answered.

First, He basely insinuates that to muse and ponder on the great concerns of *Godliness* and another world is a hard and difficult work. In great, and hazardous, and dangerous achievements for worldly advantages, however this is not made an objection. Men do not care how difficult the work is, if it be but profitable: and shall this be a stumbling block in the way? How should some houses be built, bridges over great rivers be made, fields be sowed, and dangerous voyages to sea be taken? Shall the carpenter say, Oh it is difficult, and the husbandman say, It is difficult, and the mariner say, It is difficult, and so lay the enterprise aside?

Is it not sad, and very surprising, that the enemies of the gospel, should not think any thing too hard and difficult to undertake to suppress and destroy *Godliness*; and yet many who profess love to me are not willing to encounter small difficulties to entertain and embrace me, though it be their only business and chief interest in the world? Were a man's house on fire over his head, and he likely to be burned, would he not think of ways to escape though it

was difficult? It is not because consideration about heaven and happiness is so difficult, that men avoid them, but because they have no will nor love to these things; other things are more in their affections. Besides, the rarest things are not obtained but through great difficulty. What hazard do men often run for honor and worldly riches! Oh, what projects and contrivances do they find out! And wilt thou desist from this work, because it is difficult? Men do not think it hard to carry talents of lead, or mountains of sin on their backs, and yet think *Consideration* difficult, who, like a faithful friend, would tell them how to be rid of that load, that will sink them down into the lowest pit, except they obtain faith in Christ, or receive *True Godliness* into their hearts. They do not think it hard to dig into hell, yet they think *Consideration* hard, who would teach them a way to quench that fire. They do not think it hard to be oppressed by an usurper, and yet they think *Consideration* hard, who would help them to shake him off. O fools, and slow of heart! They that have courage to meet an army in the field, and have confidence to laugh at the glittering spear and shield; they that have courage to plough the sea, to face the mouth of a cannon, to stand a volley of shot, to fight duels, endure the noise of guns, hear the clashing of swords, and lie on the cold ground many nights together, to have an arm or leg cut off, think consideration about religious things too hard! Contemn the thoughts of being overcome by deceitful and timorous *Difficulty*.

As to what *Deficiency* says, that thou art a man of weak understanding; thou canst perceive that gold is better than glass, and that pearls are better than pebbles. Thou art able to perceive thou art mortal, and must die; and know, when a bone is broken, it is good to have it set; that food is good when thou art hungry; and that it is good to get clothes to cover thee. Art thou not, then, able to consider that there is need of food for thy soul, and clothes to cover the nakedness of thy soul, and that it is good to have grace to enrich thy soul? Art thou able to find out how grievous it is to be cast into a furnace of fire, and yet canst not understand that it is worse to be cast into a fire that cannot be quenched? Nay, have not very weak and simple persons attained to the skill of *Consideration* about their eternal state; and have even outdone the wise and learned of the world? "Knowledge is easy unto him that hath understanding." Prov. xiv. 16. "Wisdom gives subtlety to the simple, and young men knowledge and discretion." Prov. i. 4. "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall

preserve thee, and understanding shall keep thee." Prov. ii. 10, 11.

As for what *Sloth* saith, thou hast cause to abhor him, for he is a beggarly character, and deserves to be driven not only out of thy house, but out of the world, for he never did any man the least good: cast him out then as a vagabond. *Thoughtful*, wouldst thou not be at pains? Remember, the slothful person shall beg at harvest, and have nothing. Thy house is ready to fall, and thy vineyard is grown over with thorns and nettles, and yet he would not have thee consider thy danger, until it is too late to escape it. Oh! how many have lost their souls by this wretch! What good comes of *Idleness*? Besides, do you not see how the men of this world hate him? They will not hearken to him, but will in despite of him engage in all ways and means to get bread to eat, and clothes to put on; nay, seek out, through great industry, rare projects to amass riches; and wilt thou be drawn away by him, from thinking on the ready way to be made rich, great, and renowned forever? It is the diligent hand that hath the promise: "Thou must seek for wisdom as for silver, and search for her as for hid treasure." Prov. ii. 4. Do not think that I put too great a burden upon thee; for observe, it is not necessary to take greater pains about this inestimable jewel, than men of the world take to get the perishing things of this life: nay, if men did but bestow half the labor about the good of their souls, that they do about getting the world, and providing for their bodies, what happy persons might they be!

As to what timorous, faint-hearted *Danger* has laid before thee, in respect to letting in *Melancholy*, this is a mere deceit; for there is a vast difference between serious *Consideration* and destructive *Melancholy*: a man is not sad, because he will not swear, cheat, gamble, and be drunk. *Consideration* will let thee see, that those men who are pleased so much with vain sports and merriment, have the least cause to rejoice of any men in the world.

*Consideration* will show you that whatsoever vain men may prate and boast of, touching joy and pleasures, yet there is no delight and felicity like that which is found in the ways of true virtue; that *Godliness* is the best security; that those serious persons who look dejected and melancholy to the carnal eye, have joys within which no stranger intermeddles with; and carry in their breast that which can make their life perpetually peaceful and joyous.

They are fools that count the life of a Christian madness, and his inward peace, an airy notion. Who is so frantic, as he who cherishes a serpent in his bosom, that will certainly sting him to death; who nev-

er sows, yet thinks to reap at harvest; who might have glorious robes to clothe him, and yet values his own rags above them, or chooses to go unclothed; who hates, and seeks to destroy his best friends, for the sake of whom he is not destroyed; who thinks to go to heaven, and yet walks the direct way to hell? Can there be greater madness than to prefer a stone before bread, or feed upon husks with the swine, when there are all things to be had, by seeking for them? Can there be greater madness than to value a base lust above God, Christ, and eternal glory?

Whereas *Danger*, in order to obstruct *Consideration* from opening to me, tells thee of the evils of the times, and that, if I am let in, thou wilt be undone, be assured, if I am kept out, there is no way to escape, but ruined thou wilt be. No danger is like soul-danger: he can never be undone that hath God for his portion, and heaven for his inheritance. Lose thy soul, and what hast thou more? And unless thou consider soon, and open to me, thou canst not save it; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

*Worldly-Cares*, I know, hinders my dear friend *Consideration* as much as any one; he would persuade thee thou hast no time to think on God nor *Godliness*, having a trade to follow, a family to provide for, &c. But shall those things hinder thee from thinking of any thing else? Is there not one thing more needful, viz—to seriously think on me, and of the concerns of thy soul, when thou art at work, or about thy worldly affairs; when thou goest out, and when thou comest in; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up? Thy heart may be with God, when thy hands are fully employed. True, if the world is in thy heart, there can be but little room for *Consideration*, much less for *True Godliness*. A continual hurry of business puts out the eye whereby it should reflect upon itself. But shall the earth keep out heaven, and the prince of darkness shut out the Prince of Light, and briars and thorns choke the good seed? Shall *Worldly-Cares* and business be thy chief guests whom thou biddest welcome, and Christ stand at thy door as a neglected stranger? Shall *Worldly Consideration* be cherished, and *Serious Consideration* be crushed, who would put thee in a way to get to heaven? But remember this, he that hath not time to open to Christ here, Christ will find no time to open to him hereafter. Can the world help thee to peace and pardon on a death bed, or riches deliver thee in the day of wrath?

As to what thy *Old Companions* lay before thee, to render me odious, if thou persist in regarding them, adieu forever! They that hate *Seriousness* for themselves,



must needs dislike it in others: these are Satan's agents, whom he sends abroad into the world to destroy virtue; these strive to put me into a wolf's skin, and then set the dogs of the town upon me. Shun keeping company with these scoffers and contempters of *True Godliness*, for the sake of thy precious soul. As thou art come into the town of *Religion*, so let the truly religious be thy companions, who will, instead of hindering, help *Serious Consideration*. What ground is there to think a man should mind the true interest of his soul, that keeps company with persons who make sport of *Serious Consideration*? What is he that keeps company with sinners, but an abettor of sinners? Remember that society in sin strangely diminishes the sense of its heinousness. As is a man's company, such is the man; and as is his company here, such it is likely to be hereafter. Oh, how do sinners harden one another in ways of wickedness! They think there is some comfort in having associates in misery. It is a hard thing indeed, *Thoughtful*, to be serious in such a wicked age as this. A wicked man, as he poisons the air in which he breathes, so he pollutes the age in which he lives. It is bad lodging in the house where God refuses to dwell; with the froward thou wilt soon learn frowardness: but it is better to be condemned for virtue by men on earth, than to be condemned for vice by the God of heaven. What sayst thou, *Thoughtful*, shall *Consideration* prevail with thee to open the door to me?

*Conscience* being now brought over to join with the solicitations of *Godliness*, *Thoughtful* was fully resolved to cherish *Serious Consideration*, in spite of all the clamor, raised by the other inmates of his house. Indeed he determined to rid himself as soon as possible of every one of them, and had no doubt of immediate success—but lo! on a sudden, new enemies rose up in his house, and made strong opposition to the admission of *Godliness*. Of this we shall give an account in the next Chapter.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Thoughtful, though he had embraced Consideration, and was resolved to receive Godliness into his house, is hindered by Old-Man, Wilful-Will, Carnal-Affections, and Apollyon. He is aided by Laborious, but had not prevailed, had it not been for another who came in to his assistance.*

THOUGHTFUL, having with much joy and gladness embraced *Consideration*, and overcome the snares and impediments those ad-

versaries (we mentioned before) laid in his way, was now resolved to receive *True Godliness*, and speedily close with Jesus Christ; but all on a sudden other enemies, that he had not suspected to be in his house before, rose up, and made strong opposition against his receiving this heavenly guest. These enemies were *Old-Man*, *Carnal-Affections*, and *Wilful-Will*, all stirred up by the envious prince *Apollyon*. But though he was thus discouraged by unexpected opposition, he found that he had, by the means of *Consideration*, and the light of God's word, some new friends to help and assist him; their names were *Conscience* and *Enlightened-Understanding*. Now *Apollyon* being in great fear that *Thoughtful*, by the help of *Consideration*, *Conscience*, and *Enlightened-Understanding*, would embrace *True Godliness*, rose up in great fury, and spoke to the rest of the infernal host to this purpose:

Most mighty pow'rs, who once from heaven fell,  
To raise this throne and monarchy in hell,  
Bestir yourselves with speed, or all is gone,  
For *Thoughtful* has almost the battle won.

All the powers of hell now combined to prevent *Thoughtful* from receiving *True Godliness*, and endeavored to stir up *Old-Man* and *Carnal-Affections*, to do what they could to place his mind and thoughts on the perishing things of this life. This put poor *Thoughtful* to a stand. One while he was resolved to open the door, but then suddenly his heart was captivated with the pleasures and delights of this life. This was because his affections were not yet thoroughly changed, nor the evil qualities of his soul removed; for *Old-Man* had grievously corrupted all his powers and faculties, which *Godliness* (who with patience waited still at his door) perceiving, asked him what the matter was that he did not let him in.

*Thoughtful* answered, he was hindered by a base adviser that he had in his house: upon this, *Godliness* and he fell into serious discourse again.

*Godli.* Who is it, *Thoughtful*, that hinders my being received?

*Thought.* His name is *Old-Man*.

*Godli.* Ah! he is my grand enemy, and hath been nearly six thousand years. There is not one in all the world, that has done more wrong than he and his daughter, *Carnal-Affections*.

*Thought.* I find also *Wilful-Will* is utterly against your admission: Lord, what will become of me? I know you are worthy of entertainment; and oh! who am I, that you should come to be guest to such a vile and unworthy wretch!

*Godli.* Nay, *Thoughtful*, I do not stand alone, but here are others waiting at thy

door to come in with me also, who are persons of no mean quality.

*Thought.* Others! pray who are they?

*Godli.* Why here is the eternal Jehovah, with Jesus Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth, and the Holy Spirit, Rev. iii. 30.

*Thought.* Lord! what shall I do? O infinite and admirable grace and condescension! God and Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, at my door, and I not let them in! Oh! this is amazing!

*Godli.* Moreover, I must tell thee; they have been waiting here ever since I came first to knock at thy door; and I so informed thee; but I perceive thy memory proves false. Thou art doubtless misled by that deceptive *Old-Man*; but if thou dost not open to me soon, I shall leave thee, and these illustrious guests will take their departure. Why dost thou not lay *Old-Man* prostrate? It is not enough to cry, What, Lord, shall I do? but thou must shake off *Sloth*, and like a brave and courageous soul acquit thyself.

*Thought.* Alas! what can I do? This *Old-Man* is too strong for me, and *Wilful-Will* is very stubborn too; I am unequal to them.

*Godli.* Why, I will tell thee; there is one in thy house that will help thee, if thou hearken to him.

*Thought.* What is his name, Sir?

*Godli.* His name is *Conscience*.

*Thought.* Sir, I know him well; he has, since his eyes were opened, been a very good friend to me: but for a great while he lay in my house as one dead, and I found his eyes almost put out by *Old-Man*; but all that he can do, is not sufficient without farther help.

*Godli.* Thou sayest right; thank *Enlightened-Understanding* for that. *Consideration*, by bringing him to read and hear God's holy word, opened his eyes also. But is there no other friend of mine in thy house, who can lend thee assistance in this time of need?

*Thought.* Alas! Sir, whom have I else that can do any thing for me? for my house is full of adversaries; never was a cage fuller of unclean and hateful birds.

*Godli.* Thou sayest right; I believe thee, poor *Thoughtful*; but see if thou canst not find a friend that I dearly love, and have a long time sought for.

*Thought.* Pray, Sir, who is that? Tell me his name.

*Godli.* His name is *Endeavor*, alias *Laborious*. You cannot imagine, *Thoughtful*, what great things he hath done: O! I love him much; he helped Noah to build the ark, and Jacob to get the blessing, and to wrestle with the angel, and to prevail too; and Solomon to build the temple. *Consid-*

*eration*, it is true, caused David to think on his ways, but it was *Endeavor*, that turned his foot to keep God's statutes. *Consideration* also brought the poor prodigal to his right mind, but it was *Endeavor* that sent him home to his father's house: it was he that made him find his feet, after the Spirit of God had brought him to himself: nay, I could tell thee, I have taught him to get many a blessing by prayer. Who was it that got the three loaves in the gospel? Was it not the importunate *Laborious*? Was it not he likewise that made the poor widow prevail with the unjust judge to avenge her of her adversary? Nay, in a word, the promise of God is made to him—"If you follow on to know the Lord, then you shall know him." It is this diligent person that makes men, with God's blessing, rich; I mean spiritually rich. Now, what dost thou say, *Thoughtful*? Canst thou find my good friend *Endeavor*?

*Thought.* Truly, Sir, now I think of it, I hope I have found him; but he has been here but a little time, and has been too much neglected by me: for I did not "strive to enter in at the straight gate," till now. But I pray, wherein will he be so useful to me? What are his properties?

*Godli.* Why, he commonly stirs up men to open the door to me. He is a great enemy to *Sloth* and *Idleness*; he makes them rise betimes in the morning to call upon God, and to read his word, and search into it very diligently. He will make you incline your ear to what *Conscience* says, and make you tremble at his reproofs and accusations when you sin against God, if you will take his counsel. He will also cause you to go and hear sermons, and not to sleep when you get there, nor neglect nor slight convictions, nor be careless and negligent in any duty; and will help you to labor after faith, and not to rest upon any thing short of Christ.

*Thought.* O! Sir, this is the very friend I want; and blessed be God I have found him. I am resolved to make use of his help and assistance continually.

Upon this he became very diligent in attending upon all the means of grace. Moreover, by the help of *Endeavor*, he cut off some one or two of the members of *Old-Man*, that body of sin, and prayed morning and evening; shunned all open profaneness and scandalous sins; would not speak at random with his tongue, nor neglect to hear one good sermon, when an opportunity presented, and became just in all his dealings with men. But now *Apollyon*, by the treachery of *Old-Man*, raised up another enemy which had almost undone him insensibly. This was *Self-Righteousness*, a very great enemy to *True Godliness*. By his influence,



*Thoughtful* was becoming quite contented with himself, and began to forget that he had not admitted *True Godliness*; but at last, he knocked again, and demanded instant admittance.

*Godli.* What is the cause of this great neglect? What, shall I not be received? O what a long time have I stood at your door! What is the difficulty now?

*Thought.* Truly, Sir, I had concluded that now the door was open, by the help of my good friend *Laborious*, for I have done what he required of me.

*Godli.* No, no, *Thoughtful*, I am still kept out. *Wilful-Will* and *Old-Man* have beguiled you, and let in another dangerous enemy, whose name is *Self-Righteousness*. I cannot enter till he be expelled and hated. This was he that quite undid poor *Legalist*, and will quite ruin you too, if you do not take heed. I would not have you slight *Endeavor*, but do not make an idol of him. If you be found in your own righteousness, you will be lost by your own unrighteousness; duties can never have too much of your diligence, nor too little of your dependence. Not the salt sea of thy own tears, but the red sea of Christ's blood must wash away thy sins. You must owe the life of your soul to the death of your Saviour. If you have no better righteousness than what is of your own providing, you will meet with no higher happiness than what is of your own deserving. You must take up duties in point of performance, but lay them all down again in point of dependence. There is as much cause to fear for you now as there ever was. What will you do!

*Thought.* Lord, help me! what shall I do indeed? O! how many are deceived, who think it is an easy thing to be saved! Surely I shall never attain to a state of grace and true conversion.

Upon this a melancholy and very dangerous person, (called *Despond*,) attacked him, and almost prostrated him to the earth. Nay, I perceived, he fractured some of his bones, wounding him so grievously, that he despaired of life. Indeed, he was overwhelmed with trouble; and that which grieved him most of all, was, to think, that all this time, not only *True Godliness*, but Christ himself also waited at his door. *Godliness*, perceiving what a deplorable condition he was in, spake to him after this manner:

*Godli.* Poor *Thoughtful*, do not give way to *Apollyon*, that prince of darkness; for it is he who hath stirred up that cruel enemy *Despond* to take away thy life; that cruel destroyer hath sent many souls to hell. Come, though thy own righteousness is worth nothing, being but like filthy rags, yet Christ's righteousness is sufficient to

cover thee, and his blood to heal thy wounds. Your business is to believe, viz. wholly to get out of yourself, and rely upon Christ's all-sufficient merits; and know assuredly, that the very moment you cast yourself, by a lively act of faith, upon Jesus Christ, I shall enter your habitation.

O know, poor *Thoughtful*, that Christ's righteousness hath more worth in it to save you, and raise you up to heaven, than your own unrighteousness hath weight to cast you down to hell. You say you are a great, and hell-deserving sinner; but you can be but a sinner, and Christ died for sinners; and never did any throw themselves by an act of true faith upon him, but they were saved. He died for the chief of sinners. Do you not hear him say, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?" Matt. xi. 28, 29.

*Thought.* O that I could believe! My sins! my sins!

No sooner had *Godliness* showed him what it was to open the door, and laid before him the necessity of union with Christ, and of faith in him, but *Apollyon*, with the *Old-Man*, and other bitter enemies, began to cause dreadful commotions in his house; for nothing doth the devil fear more than true faith: and *Thoughtful* found it very hard to believe, *Wilful-Will* being stubborn and perverse. *Apollyon*, also tried his skill in many other ways to undo him, so that he was hard beset; but when he saw none of those ways were likely to succeed, he laid before him the outward danger he would be in, if *True Godliness* were embraced; he told him, he was likely to suffer great persecution, it being the portion of all who entertained *True Godliness*, insomuch that his very life might be in danger. But *Godliness* comforted him with many precious promises; telling him also, he had such a glorious retinue to attend him, which he would bring into his house with him, that he need not fear any difficulty, provided he would but admit him; and seeing he was still unable to open the door, his enemies being too strong for him, he told him, there was one friend of his, whom, if he could prevail with to come to his assistance, he would soon make the way clear, and open the door. Who is that? said *Thoughtful*, with great earnestness mingled with joy. *Godliness* then discovered immediately the excellency of his person, and the nature of his operation, by which he soon understood it was the Holy Ghost. Upon this he was not a little delighted, and presently cried out, as one whose life is in danger, to God, to send the Holy Spirit to assist him. "O Lord, the Holy Spirit, teach me thy truth, and work in me to do thy pleasure." Thus he cried, with the greatest fervency, and pres-

ently there were strange strugglings indeed (the Holy Spirit acting upon all the faculties of his soul;) yea, such a conflict as he never before met with. *Judgment* in the combat behaved himself valiantly; *Consideration* was not wanting; *Conscience* laid on home blows, being backed by *Endeavor*; and in the beginning of the combat, the *Holy Spirit* came in, and with him *Faith* and other attendants of *Godliness*; then the door flew open, and *Godliness* entered. *Old-Man* hid himself. *Wilful-Will* submitted, and became *Thoughtful's* very good servant. *Carnal Affections* changed their minds, and were made heavenly; and so abode, increasingly, to his dying day.

*True Godliness* being now entered into his house, with his attendants, *Thoughtful* was not a little comforted. Now the retinue of *Godliness*, who came in with him, were these, viz. *Newman*, *True Love*, *Humility*, *Sobriety*, *Sincerity*, *Temperance*, *Self-Clearing*, *Faithful*, *Excellent-Knowledge*, *Blessed-Experience*, *Godly-Zeal*, *Filial-Fear*, *Precious-Promises*, *Holy-Revenge*, *Vehement-Desire*, *Constant-Supplication*, *Spiritual-Indignation*, *Christian-Courage*, *Sincere Aims and Ends*, *Careful Patience*, *Hospitality*, *Stability*, *Charity*, *Liberality*, *Chastity*, *Purity*, *Holy-Sympathy*, *Wake-Man*, *Watch-Well*, *Peaceable*, *Harmless*, *Gentleness*, *Brotherly-Kindness*, and *Love-All*, besides several others of like quality. These, as I formerly stated, were all persons of noble birth, being the offspring of Heaven. I perceived also a most glorious company with them; and that you may know what a happy man poor *Thoughtful* now became, I shall inform you who they were.

The first, was *The Father* of *True Godliness*, for he always dwells where he dwells, and abides with this his glorious and heavenly attendant. Then the *Lord Jesus Christ*; which brought that word to my remembrance, "If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 23. Also the other words, "I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me," Rev. iii. 20. 2 Tim. i. 14. Also, *The Holy Spirit*, for he is said to dwell in us; and besides these, there was, *Union*. *Reconciliation*. *Justification*. *Acceptation*. *Communion with the Father and Son*. *Adoption*. *Pardon of Sin*. *The Image of God*. *Peace of Conscience*. *Joy in the Holy Ghost*. *Free Access to the Throne of Grace*. *A Place in the heavenly Family*. *Fellowship with Saints*. *The earnest Sealing of the Spirit*. *Increase of Grace*. *The Attendance of an innumerable Company of Angels*.

But lo! I looked, and afar off I espied

another glorious train following, in the midst of which I plainly discerned, amongst others, (whose glory was so great I could not behold them,) *Immortality*, *Incorruption*, *Perfection*, *Glorious Victory*, *Heavenly Triumph*, *the Beautiful Vision*, *Rivers of Pleasure*, *the Tree of Life*, *the King in his Beauty*, *a white Throne*, *Mansions of Glory*, *the Holy City*, *New Jerusalem*, *a Crown of Righteousness*, and *Millions of glorified saints coming amongst the holy Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the Host of Heaven*, with palms and harps in their hands, singing Hallelujah to God and the Lamb. They made such melody, that it was sufficient to ravish the soul in such a manner, as to leave no heart nor spirit in us for the empty objects of this world.

Now the two first glorious companies who attended *True Godliness* here, entered with him immediately, and the other glories *Thoughtful* was sure of possessing after being faithful until death, so that he was wonderfully fortified against all domestic commotions, or foreign approaching dangers. He could not indeed, but expect new troubles would be raised against him, both from within and without; and so indeed it suddenly came to pass, for *Apollyon*, the prince of darkness, first raised up all his scattered forces which still remained within, and lurked in secure corners of his house. *Old-Man*, though he was dangerously wounded, and lay bleeding, and though *Holy Revenge* had a strict command to kill him, he did not presently do it, by which means it happened, that in a little time he seemed to revive again; which was a great grief to him, and a hinderance also to *True Godliness*. And the worst was, this *inward corruption*, alias, *Old-Man*, alias *Body of Sin*, getting too great power by the treachery of *Apollyon*, Prince of darkness, so laid before him his manifold evils, and remissness in holy duties, as to persuade him that he harbored an enemy of *True Godliness* named *Hypocrisy*; and that he was likely, upon that account, to lose all his hopes here, and that happiness of which *Godliness* assured him hereafter. But, as the Lord had ordered it, *Self-Clearing*, by the help of *Conscience*, made it apparent to him, that *Hypocrisy* was not concealed in his house, nor in the least countenanced by him. For, first, they proved that he had a hatred of all iniquity, and did not allow of, nor countenance any sin whatsoever, by the aid of *Spiritual Indignation*. And secondly, that there was no one duty which he was convinced of, but he readily submitted to it by the help of *New-Obedience*. Thirdly, That he was peculiarly careful of, and had alway (by the help of *Christian Watch-Well*) kept a strict eye over *Mrs. Heart*, whom he most of all mistrusted, and had a



great jealousy of. Fourthly, That he rested not upon the external performance of any duty, but did all to the praise and glory of God, by the help of *True-Love*. Fifthly, That he was the same continually in private which he was in public, by the assistance of *Filial-Fear*. Sixthly, And that also he gave, according to his ability, at all times, to *Theology* (Christ's minister) and to the poor saints; the one by the aid of *New-Obedience*, *Bounty*, *Liberality*, and *Godly-Zeal*, and the other by the help of *Christian-Charity*. Seventhly, That he did nothing to be seen of men, or for the sake of *Vain-Glory*, by the directions of *Holy-Ends* and *Aims*, and by the power of *Heavenly New-Man*. Eighthly, That he was always constant in his love to, and his esteem of *True Godliness*, being as much for the work of *Godliness*, as for the wages, by the assistance of *Faithful*. Ninthly, That he did not inordinately love, nor set his affections upon, the things of this life, by the help of *Temperance* and *Sobriety*. Tenthly, That he labored to live a spotless life, being taught so to do by *Purity*. Eleventhly, That he bore up valiantly in the profession of the gospel, not being ashamed nor afraid to own Jesus Christ before men, by the means of *Stability* and *Christian-Courage*. Twelfthly, That he did not faint under afflictions and trials, by the help of *Blessed-Experience*, *Patience*, and *Precious-Promises*. Thirteenthly, And that he was kept from being corrupted in principle, or led into error, by the means of *Excellent-Knowledge*.

Now *Conscience* and *Self-Clearing* having thus freed *Thoughtful* from the false charge about harboring *Hypocrisy*, he perceived what excellent advantage he had, and should receive by *Godliness*' noble retinue; and hereupon he fell so in love with them, that he never would go any where, nor perform any service without their company; which *Apollyon* perceiving, knew it was in vain to assault him any more in that way; but being filled with rage and malice against him, he raised up mighty forces and powers upon him from without. He stirred up many of the base sort to abuse him, amongst which were these following: *Hate-Good*, *Time-Server*, *Pride*, *Out-Side*, *Riot*, *Ignorance*, *Hard-Heart*, *Scoffer*, *Please-All*, *Love-Lust*, *Giddy-Head*, *Rob-Saint*, *Temperizer*, *Idolator*, *Avarice*, *Shameless*, *High-Minded*, *Scared-Conscience*; who, with many more of like sort, compassed him about like bees, mis-called and abused him in a cruel and unmerciful manner, which made him anxiously inquire what the cause should be; but at last he perceived the ground and reason of it was only because he had received *True Godliness*.

Remembering that word of Jesus Christ,

"Marvel not if the world hate you;" and that word, "They shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name sake;" with the saying of the apostle, "And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution;" he saw that nothing could be expected but that these fellows would distress him. Though by the help he had from *Godliness*' glorious retinue, he was supported and established in the ways of grace and true holiness, yet he was somewhat disquieted in his mind. He now began to think he must remove from these tormentors. He wondered they should so perplex him, and felt sure, were he to change his condition and manner of living, he should certainly escape their annoyance and serve God with more pleasure and advantage. What was now essential to his peace was, to be associated with *Christian-Contentment*.

### CHAPTER XIII.

*Thoughtful, meeting with his Friend Contentment, and finding now nothing wanting in order to the making of his Life sweet and comfortable, sung Hallelujahs, Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving to God and the Lamb.*

THOUGHTFUL CHRISTIAN, for so now we must call him, notwithstanding all the high and unutterable blessings, riches, and honor, he had acquired by embracing *True Godliness*, became sad and melancholy, by perceiving not only the great distresses and troubles which his family were like to meet with in this world, but also what unsettled, and unhappy days, he was fallen into, and of the abounding evils and horrid blasphemies which he witnessed wherever he came. *Godliness*, however, informed him of a person named *Contentment*, whom he saw he had not yet found; and remarked, that if he could but acquire him for an associate, his mind would remain sweetly settled and composed, and that he would enjoy all imaginable calmness of soul, and be delivered from all anxious thoughts, and undergo crosses and harsh accidents with equanimity and acquiescence of spirit; wholly submitting unto, and being fully satisfied with, the divine disposal. Now, this glorious, noble, and renowned personage, *Contentment*, had been, it seems, travelling from place to place, like a poor pilgrim, as *True Godliness* had done, seeking a fit resting place, but could find none. He had been to visit *Riches*, but was not admitted; and *Poverty* also, but found no lodging there; with *Youth* he could find no abode, and *Old-Age* was a stranger to him; *Pleasure*, could give him no entertainment; *Honors* were forced to

say, we know him not. He was not lodged in the prince's palace, nor in the peasant's cottage: the unmarried sought him, but could not find him, and the married wished for him, but he found there was no abiding with them neither. *Thoughtful* now hearing that he was accustomed to dwell where *Godliness* took up his lodging, sent presently his old friend *Consideration* to seek for him, and by the providence of God, it was not long before he was found. For the information of my thinking reader, I shall show how *Consideration*, by the assistance of *Faith*, met with him, and brought him home to *Thoughtful Christian*, and made him his fixed companion.

First, *Consideration* led him forth to ponder upon the divine attributes, providences, and promises, and taught him to confide cheerfully in the infinite power, wisdom, holiness, mercy, goodness, truth, and faithfulness of God.

Secondly, He stirred him up to seek for *Contentment*, by observing his present state and condition. What, saith he, hath God done for thee! Thou wast in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, and God hath brought thee out, and yet not content! Thou wast a child of wrath, and now art a child of God, yet not content! Hast thou God for thy God, Christ for thy Saviour, the Holy Spirit for thy Comforter, and yet not content! Nay, doth God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit dwell with thee, and yet not content! Hast thou received *True Godliness*' glorious retinue into thy house, to abide with thee, to enrich thee, to strengthen thee, to comfort thee, and make thy life sweet to thee, and yet not content! Are thy sins pardoned, thy soul justified—hast thou union and communion with the Father and Son, and yet not content! Is thy name written in the Book of Life! Art thou an heir of a crown and a kingdom that fadeth not away, and yet not content! Nay, let me tell thee, all these things, and many more, are absolutely thine with *Contentment*. Come, art thou willing to possess them, to make them thine own, and enjoy them forever? If thou wouldst be sure of them, then get *Contentment* to dwell with thee; for "Godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Tim. vi. 6. It doth not say, *Godliness* without *Contentment* but with *Contentment*. This glorious prince will put thee into the present possession of all true happiness, and wilt thou not resolve to give him a residence in thy house?

Thirdly, Ponder upon the excellency of *Contentment*; for a saint never looks like himself, or acts like a person of rank and quality, who hath received so many glorious and excellent qualities and privileges, but when in all conditions he is therewith content.

Fourthly, Ponder, saith *Consideration*, upon the evils of *Discontent*. Oh! what dishonor doth it bring to God! what reproach to *True Godliness*! and what great wrong to thy own soul!

Fifthly, It is below thy Christian relation, to be discontent. It was the speech of Joadab to Amon, "Why art thou, being a king's son, lean from day to day?" But that was for a wicked cause; he saw his spirit was troubled, for otherwise he was healthful enough. It is below thy relation to God, who is thy portion, thy shield, thy sanctuary, thy father. David thought it no small matter to be a son-in-law to an earthly king; and thou art the King's son of heaven and earth, and yet not content! It is below thy relation to Jesus Christ. What, art thou the spouse of Christ, a member of Christ, the brother and friend of Christ, an heir with Christ, and yet not content! It is below thy relation to the Holy Ghost. Is he thy comforter, guide, witness, strength, and art thou not content! It is below thy relation to the holy angels who are thy guard, thy attendants, thy friends, thy watch-men! hast thou millions of those glorious spirits to minister to thee, to fight for thee, keep thee in all thy ways, and yet not content! It is below thy relation to the saints and heavenly family. Art thou brought home to sit down with them, to partake of all the sacred privileges of God's house with them, and to have a share in all their prayers, and yet not content! It is below the high and sovereign dignity thou art raised to. Art thou born from above, a prince, a favorite of heaven, an heir of both worlds, and yet not content!

Lastly, Consider, all thy afflictions, troubles, and sorrows are nothing, in comparison of what other saints have met with; nay, to those Jesus Christ met with himself for thy sake, and art thou not content! Besides, are they not less than thy sins deserve? Nay, all those hard things thou meetest with, God intended to work for thy good. All the bitter things thou art ever like to meet with, may be in this world nothing but sweet hereafter, and yet not content! All thy troubles will soon be gone, they are but for a moment; besides, they are intermixed with much sweet, and yet not content!

No sooner had *Consideration* laid all these things and many other of the like nature before him, but lo! to his joy, *Contentment* came in, and was immediately welcomed by *Godliness*' heavenly retinue; yea, it cannot be imagined what rejoicing there was now in poor *Thoughtful's* house; it would have diffused joy through every benevolent mind, to see how the scattered powers of the enemy were forced to fly into concealment. *Apollyon* himself was



forced to withdraw; *Despond* was vanished; *Disquiet* and *Murmur* could find no place. Oh! this was to him the joyful day of days.

Now that blessed *Contentment* was fairly settled in the house, he with the kind retinue which *Godliness* had brought in before, soon began to set the affairs of *Thoughtful* in order. *Constant Supplication* proved himself an excellent help. *Careful*, *Hospitality*,

*Holy Sympathy*, *Love-All*, and others contributed to secure the respect of all his neighbors. His residence in the town of *Religion* proved a public blessing; and so long as my knowledge of him continued, he remained happy and prosperous, ever blessing the day he became acquainted with TRUE GODLINESS, and employed much of his time in thanksgiving and praise to God and the LAMB.

THE END.

## HELP

TO

# ZION'S TRAVELLERS:

BEING

AN ATTEMPT TO REMOVE VARIOUS STUMBLING-BLOCKS OUT OF THE WAY RELATING TO DOCTRINAL, EXPERIMENTAL AND PRACTICAL RELIGION.

BY ROBERT HALL, LATE OF ARNSBY.

### INTRODUCTION.

"Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people."—*Isaiah* lvii. 14.

THESE words seem to have been the language of those who in a time of general declension adhered to God and religion, and in every difficulty and danger trusted in the Lord, being encouraged by his precious promises, as mentioned in the preceding verse. Knowing, by mournful experience, the various obstacles and intricacies which annoy and perplex the heavenly traveller in times of distress and obscurity, they are represented as saying, on behalf of the discouraged and entangled, to those who were employed in the ways of Zion, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, &c.

Whether the text be considered as historical, or prophetic, as a relation of what was the request of the godly in the days

of the prophet, or a prediction of what would be solicited in some future period, it is evident from the words that the people of God are represented as on a journey, seeking a better country, which is an heavenly; therefore are frequently called, strangers, and pilgrims on the earth; that the way in which they are to walk is not at all times easy to be discovered; and when obscurity attends the path, hesitation prevents a progress. Hence the servants of the Lord are called upon to cast up and prepare the way, to render it more visible and obvious to every spiritual passenger, to see that it be raised or elevated, and thereby rendered safe, even when floods of persecution and temptation abound, and made as plain as possible, by the removal of every thing tending to injure the weak or benighted traveller: therefore it is added, 'Take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.' This desire, this request seems to be represented as the personal and united wish of every good man, whether in the days of the prophet, or in future periods of

time. For thus saith the Lord, "He that putteth his trust in me—shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people."

Though stumbling-block is mentioned only in the singular, as if pointing to some one danger or difficulty to be removed, yet it is evident from scripture, that various things are so denominated; but the singular number only being used in the words, may denote the dreadful nature and dangerous tendency of the doctrine and practice of idolatry, which was the stumbling-block Balaam taught Balak to cast before the children of Israel, and against which the prophet in this chapter had been bearing his testimony. The doctrine of idolatry in its different forms has been, and continues to be, a fatal stumbling-block to many: hence the church of Pergamos was censured for keeping in her community them that held the doctrine of Balaam. Rev. ii. 14. Again, if the text be considered as the language of every believer, it may refer to, or include, whatever was or may be found of a stumbling nature to each of them. The experiences of Christians are very different respecting what is, or has been, to them of a trying, perplexing nature; and as each Christian is ready to fear what has been the principle stumbling-block to him may be the same to others, it is natural to suppose, that as every heart knows its own bitterness, each tried believer would thus express himself, and in reference to his own experience, say, "Take the stumbling-block out of the way of my people."

Besides, as there is often a prevalence of various errors in different periods, and distinct places; so, what is injurious to the people of God, as a prevailing stumbling-block in their way, is variable, according to the methods taken to obscure, misrepresent, or oppose the solemn and sacred truths, which God has graciously revealed in his word; or lessen their genuine influence and native tendency, as recorded in the holy scriptures.

From these considerations we may infer, that though the text speaks in the singular number, yet the servants of the Lord must expect to have various things of a stumbling nature to remove, according to the different exercises of the saints, or the injury done to truth at different times, and by different persons.

The ministers of Christ are set for the defence of the gospel, and are appointed to help the faith and joy of those who have believed through grace. And as this is a day in which errors of various kinds abound, a day of gloominess and perplexity to many sincere Christians who desire to know

the truth as it is in Jesus, to be devoted to him through life, as well as found in him at death; for the sake of such I would endeavor, as the Lord shall help, to remove some of those stumbling-blocks, which lie in their way, relating to DOCTRINAL, EXPERIMENTAL and PRACTICAL RELIGION.

## PART I.

### DOCTRINAL DIFFICULTIES.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### *The Deity of Christ.*

RESPECTING doctrinal difficulties, we may observe the most common and artful methods taken by many to overturn the soul-supporting truth of Christ's divinity. It is only from the sacred scriptures we can have information respecting the person and work of our precious Redeemer: to these he appealed in the days of his flesh, saying, Search the scriptures, for they testify of me: but with what deceitfulness is the word of God handled by many, when the person of Christ is the subject of inquiry! [Instances might easily be multiplied; but I shall mention only the following.]

1. Some in order to overthrow his claim to divinity, and the supreme love of his people, have collected a number of passages of scripture, which plainly declare his inferiority to God: from which they infer, with an appearance of gravity and good will to truth, that as scripture is evidently consistent with itself, he therefore who is therein declared to be inferior to deity, cannot possibly be divine. But a little attention is sufficient to discover that art is substituted in the room of argument, and sophistry occupies the place of sense. Every good man will rejoice in the harmony and consistency of divine revelation, and readily allow that inferiority and equality are opposites, and that in the *sense* in which Christ is spoken of as an inferior, he is not, cannot be equal with God.

But as in the person of Christ two distinct natures are united, in consequence of which he is Immanuel, God with us; therefore it does not follow, because he has a nature inferior to God, yea, even to angels, that his superior nature is not properly divine. Ten thousand testimonies in proof of his humanity do not in the least degree enervate his claim to deity: a very small



attention to the subject under consideration, is sufficient to discover the fallaciousness of such reasoning as the above. For those who maintain the divinity of the blessed Saviour, as firmly believe him to be properly man, as they do who deny him to be God over all.

It is our unspeakable felicity, that the Son of God was sent into the world as a Mediator, to make peace between Jehovah in his public character as a governor, and rebellious men, that the Lord God might dwell among them, and they with him. In order to accomplish which, it was necessary he should assume human nature, and dwell among us. To reconcile God and man, it was needful he should be a *middle person, possessing the nature of both*, and as equally interested in favor of each party, be able to establish Heaven's righteous claim, and raise self-ruined man to a state of safety, dignity, and delight.

Considered as a complex person, he kindly condescended to act on our behalf in office capacity, as if inferior to Deity. For as Mediator he acted as under the direction and commission of his Father; and as such, was God's servant, though his Son; therefore said, of himself he could do nothing: not through the want of ability, but being under official obligations to adhere to his Father's directions. Though an ambassador can do nothing of himself, but is bound in duty to act in all things in conformity to his instructions, yet it is not from thence inferable that his nature, ability, or mental powers, are inferior to those of his sovereign; for the restriction or limitation is not the effect of personal debility, but of office capacity. The blessed Jesus is therefore not only inferior to God as man, but as Mediator; nevertheless, inferiority in office does not prove, nor imply, an inferiority of nature. Nay, on the contrary, the errand on which he came, and the work assigned him to perform, were so infinitely important, awful, and arduous, that he could not have discharged his trust without the power and penetration of Deity. Hence he appealed to his works in proof of his divine mission, likewise as evidences of his filial relation to God, in such a sense as exposed him to the charge of blasphemy, had he not been properly divine: John x. 24—38. His true dignity as a divine person being inferable from what he did, his enemies were on that account inexcusable, because his works sufficiently demonstrated to every honest inquiring mind, who he was, as well as from whence he came; though it was inconsistent with his then state of humiliation and debasement, to allow the glories of divinity to shine forth in their native lustre and infinite splendor: hence he repeatedly charged his friends not to publish to

the world who he was, till after his resurrection from the dead. That he was a man, his enemies knew as well as his disciples; yea, some of them thought him to be the promised Messiah, and said one to another, This is the heir, let us kill him: but as a divine person they knew him not; for, had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. For the principal charge brought against him, and for which he was condemned, was, that, being a man, he made himself equal with God; John v. 18. Chap. xix. 7.

If Christ exposed himself to death through ambiguity, how did he witness a good confession at Pilate's bar? If he did not mean an equality with God, which the Jews thought he did, strange that his regard to truth did not lead to an explanation of what he intended.

It is no wonder that priests and others in that day of prevalent ignorance and perverseness, should have a secret conviction of his office capacity as Messiah, without an idea of his divinity, seeing, some under the profession of gospel ministers, acknowledge and plead for his divine mission, and yet oppose and reject with contempt the idea of his being a divine person.

How kind and wonderful the condescension of the blessed Jesus, that he should stoop to take upon him human nature (not as when in its original dignity, but in its debased state) in order to suffer, and serve, in favor of those who would, he knew, on that very account, rob him of his reputation, as a divine person! It is mournful to think he should be despised on earth for that, on account of which he is admired in heaven.

Consider the complex capacity of the adorable Jesus as God, and as man, with his acting as Mediator, in consequence of such an union of distinct natures, and then the scripture account of his inferiority and subjection to the divine Father will appear quite consonant with the doctrine of his true and proper divinity; and the stumbling-block aforesaid be totally removed. But when the aforesaid [difficulty] is removed, behold another is with equal art thrown in the way of the ignorant and unwary, which is

2. A perversion of the terms used in treating of this important subject. In consequence of such unwarrantable, not to say unmanly craft, the *unity* of the divine *essence* is represented to be so evidently inconsistent with a *plurality* of divine *persons*, as if it was universally agreed to consider them as absolute contradictions, and to convey irreconcilable ideas; whereas it is very well known that those who believe the divinity of the blessed Jesus (and the Holy Ghost) as firmly maintain the unity of the

divine essence, or that there is only one God, as they do who oppose a plurality of divine persons. Yet things are so represented as if they and the Trinitarians agreed in that about which they differ, and again as if they differed about that in which they are agreed: for the consistency between a plurality of *persons* in the one divine *essence* is the very thing for which those contend who believe the divinity of Christ. And that there is but one living and true God, both parties unite and agree in acknowledging. The doctrines of *unity* in the divine *essence*, and a *plurality of persons*, are in their very nature distinct, and ought never to be confounded. But that they are opposites and inconsistent in reference to God, has not yet been proved, and I believe never will. But though the adversaries of Christ's divinity *oppose* the one to the other, as if they were allowed contraries; yet, by and by, they will treat those very terms by which the doctrines are distinguished, as if they were intended to express the same thing, or convey similar ideas. Hence, if the *essence* of God be the subject treated of, the term *person* is immediately substituted, as if synonymous with that of *essence*, and then with an air of triumph it is inferred, that *If God be one, he is not two or three*. Again, if the doctrine of divine *personality* be the matter of *immediate* consideration, and scriptural proofs be adduced in support of a *plurality of persons truly divine*, behold the idea of *essence* is by them substituted in the room of *person*, and *unity* instead of *plurality*, and by the help of such a *substitution* and perversion of terms, and *shuffle* of ideas, they very gravely exclaim against Tritheism, i. e. the doctrine of three Gods. As the friends of Christ's divinity never assert God to be *three* in the sense in which he is *one*, nor *one* in the *same* sense in which he is *three*, but *perpetually* distinguish between a *plurality of persons* and the *unity of God*, the methods taken as aforesaid are disingenuous, contemptible, mean, and even beneath notice, were it not that thereby inattentive minds are imposed upon, the opposition to the Redeemer's dignity is supported, and weak Christians are stumbled.

It is evident, however, beyond contradiction, that according to the scriptures there was a plurality of persons *antecedent* to creation; for in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God: all things were made by him, and without him, was not any thing made that was made; John i. 1, 2, 3: that glorious person who was *with* God was therefore *distinct* from him with whom he was, and yet of the same nature, being one

in essence with the Father. For the word was God, and that Jesus Christ is intended by the Word who was in the beginning with God, and the author of creation, is plain from verse 10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him. Again, verse 14, The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. As he was before all things, so by him all things consist; Col. i. 17. He was with the Father from everlasting, and all that is done in time is according to the eternal purpose which the Father purposed in him. Hence God chose his people in him, committed them to his care in the everlasting covenant, and promised eternal life in him before the world began. Many instances might be given of Christ's existence before his incarnation, as he said, Before Abraham was, I am; John viii. 58. The plural pronouns used in scripture by the great Eternal when speaking of acts, authority, and properties peculiar to Deity, are striking proofs of a plurality of persons in one essence, God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; Gen. i. 26. Behold the man is become like one of us; chap. iii. 22. Let us go down and confound their language: chap. xi. 7. Whom shall I send, who will go for us? Isaiah, vi. 8. And respecting all other objects of worship, Jehovah's language is, Produce your cause, saith the Lord, bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob; let them show the former things what they be, that we may consider them. Or declare us things to come, that we may know that ye are gods; yea, do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Isaiah xli. 21, 22, 23. Again, to stain the pride of man and curb human arrogance, he asserts his divine prerogative in the following solemn and instructive interrogations. Who hath declared from the beginning that we may know? And before time, that we may say he is righteous? I beheld, and there was no man, no counsellor, that when I asked them could answer a word; Isaiah xli. 26, 28. From these and many more instances which might be produced, it is evident, that there is a plurality of persons in the one eternal God, even the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one. In the name of which sacred three the holy ordinance of baptism was ordered to be administered.

The adversaries of Christ's divinity being conscious, that the scriptures treat of a plurality of persons employed in creation, &c. and lest the artful manner of treating the argument respecting person and essence as aforesaid should not block up the



way leading to the divine glories of Jesus, have invented another stumbling-block to render the path of faith in Christ's divinity quite impassable, which is [to advocate]

3. The pre-existence of Christ's soul. It is acknowledged some have maintained this sentiment without any designed injury to the doctrine of the Trinity. But it is equally evident that some of the most virulent enemies of Christ's divine personality, find it impossible to give their scheme of opposition even the *appearance* of consistency, but as *aided* by the aforesaid hypothesis; therefore *great* pains have been taken to render it plausible, in consequence of which it has proved a stumbling-block to some.

But that it was not a human soul which existed with the Father before time, and which made the world, and to which God spake, saying, Let us make man, &c. &c. but his own infinitely glorious Son, will appear, if the following things be duly considered. He who was with the Father, was with him from everlasting, rejoicing always before him, and whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting; Mic. v. 2, and who should be called, though clothed with humanity, the everlasting Father the mighty God; Isaiah ix. 6. But it is absurd to suppose a creature to have existed *before* time began. Every creature *once* was not; to suppose a creature always to have been, is to form an idea of a creature which was never created; all things were made by Jesus Christ, without him nothing was made that was made; but according to the aforesaid opinion, there was a creature made which Jesus Christ was no way concerned in the formation of; for a creature cannot be thought to have created itself, without absurdly supposing it to have been before it was, to exist prior to its existence, or to act while it was nothing, in order to be something—the above absurdities are unavoidable: if the scripture account of the creation (as the production of a plurality of persons) be credited, and the divinity of Christ be denied.

As a soul could not create itself, so neither could it be the author of the other parts of the creation, which Jesus Christ is positively declared to be. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: Col. i. 16. If a human soul be the author of creation, various creatures would be above their Creator. Angels, for instance, would be superior to their Maker, and excel him in strength; for man (which Christ is asserted only to be) is naturally inferior to those celestial spirits. Thou madest him a little lower than the

angels; which supposes the angels were, when his humanity, was made; Heb. ii. 7. The acknowledgment of Christ as Creator, renders the denial of his proper divinity inexcusable, and says the foundation of not only revealed, but natural religion: for, if Jesus be the former of all things, the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse who glorify him not as God. Rom. i. 20, 21. Some assert that Christ was only an instrument in creation; but the work of creation was of such a *nature* as to *exclude* the idea of an *instrumental* creator. An instrument, if concerned at all, must have been employed either *before* or *after* the *production* of being, for there was no medium. Not *before*, because prior to creation there was not *any thing* existing for an instrument to *act upon*, or to be *employed* about. Not *after*, because when a creature *does* exist, it is too late for an *instrument* to be employed in *producing* it. Nothing short of infinite agency could possibly be concerned in creation; the persons so engaged were properly divine, and essentially one. However, that there was no instrument concerned is beyond all dispute, if what Jehovah says be duly regarded; for he declares there was none such with him. Prov. viii.; Mic. v. 2. Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb; I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretched out the heavens *ALONE*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *BY MYSELF*. Isaiah xlv. 24. Which *ALONE* spreadeth out the heavens. Job ix. 8. Hence it appears, that though they were distinct persons employed in creation, yet they were so united as to be included in the one all-creating Jehovah.

4. To render the scheme of opposition to Christ's divinity more consistent, and the idea of the soul existing before time, instead of the Son of God, less exceptionable; it has been thought proper to exclude the body from being an essential constituent part of a man. Such an exclusion to be sure was a happy thought, and quite necessary; for without it the all-creating creature would not have been properly either *God*, *angel*, or *man*. But that it might be considered as belonging to some scale or class of being, "It is asserted to be a proper human person, a true and real man, the body being only a temporary covering for, but not a constituent part of, human nature." But this method of depreciating the divine glories of the blessed Jesus will prove abortive, if the Scripture account of human nature be attended to; and without doubt he who made man could best describe him. From the sacred pages we learn, that the

Lord God formed *man* of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and *man* became a living soul; Gen. ii. 7: and that the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman! and Adam said, She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of *man*. Again, to Adam as a transgressor, the Lord said, Dust *thou* art, and unto dust shalt *thou* return; Gen. iii. 19. *Man* shall return again to dust. Now as the soul was not formed of the dust, nor the rib of which Eve was made, taken out of the *soul*; but the *rib* from the *body*, and the body from the *ground*; therefore the *body* must be a constituent part of *man*, for the body only returns to dust, and yet the Lord says, *man* shall return thither. Job xxxiv. 15. Again: the personal name of man is often given to the body, which would be improper if the body was not a part of the person. Jacob in his affecting lamentation says, Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning: thus his father wept for him. Gen. xxxvii. 33, 35. It was not the *soul*, but the *body* of his son which he concluded was torn asunder; nor his own soul, but his body, that would go down to the grave. And when the same patriarch was near death, he charged his sons, saying, Bury me with my fathers; in such a cave which he described; adding, there they buried *Abraham* and *Sarah* his wife; there they buried *Isaac* and *Rebecca* his wife, and there I buried *Leah*. Gen. xlix. 29, 31.

And that the body of *Christ* was an essential part of *his* humanity, is evident from what the angel said to his weeping friends. *He is not here he is risen*: Come, see the place where the Lord lay. Matt. xxviii. 6. But if the body was no proper constituent part of his manhood, *he* never lay in the grave; nor did he ever rise from the dead, for *he* did not die. They did not nail *him* to the tree; the whole account of his *corporal* sufferings is a mere fiction, if it be true, that his body was not a proper constituent part of *himself*. In a word, there never will be a resurrection of any man, if *bodies* are not essential to human nature, and this world of men are quite as invisible to each other as the world of angels are [to them.] According to that notion, the sight of a man is a singular rarity. That a soul can exist without a body is readily allowed, but such a separate existence is the effect of *death*; and can it be thought reasonable that Christ's first existence should be a state similar to that of the dead? Once more, on such a supposition Christ could not be the son of man in any sense, because his soul is said to exist before all men; and his body not a part of his humanity. But he was the son of Da-

vid, a descendant of Abraham, as the scriptures assert, and as the apostle to the Hebrews said, "It is evident our Lord sprung out of Judah;"\* Heb. vii. 14. To conclude; the incarnation of Christ was not only considered by the great apostle as an instance of infinite condescension, but admired by him and every believer in his day, as being in its nature really inexplicable, and truly mysterious; they did not dispute the *fact*, though they could not conceive *how* divinity and humanity were united in one person; but rejoiced in, and steadily supported, its reality as the pillar and ground of the truth. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh:" 1 Tim. iii. 15, 16. "The Word" which "was God," "was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us."

But if Christ be only a man, or a mere creature, the wonder ceases, for it cannot be thought a thing singular and surprising for a human soul to possess a body; nor for God to manifest himself to a holy creature, and employ in his service a good man. It is truly lamentable and really astonishing that any who wish to be saved by Jesus, should endeavor to sink his character and diminish his dignity: Yea, rejoice in hope of proving the Saviour infinitely unworthy of their supreme love and delight. You happy souls who need, know and esteem the Redeemer, as infinitely powerful, and divinely precious—oh, pity the condition, and dread the deception of such, whose peace and pleasure rise *high* in consequence of the Saviour *sinking low* in their esteem. Pray for them, and take heed lest you also be tempted; and [labor] that your own faith may be firm in, and your love fervent to, the infinitely glorious and lovely Redeemer. Consider and frequently contemplate the proofs of his proper divinity, as recorded in the sacred volume: such as the properties of which he is possessed, the

\* From a conviction of the singular absurdity attending the supposition of a creature existing from eternity, some have boldly asserted that *everlasting* from which Christ is said to exist, only intends a measurable period, and therefore does not convey the idea of eternity, or unlimited duration. It is granted that by the term *everlasting* and *eternal* likewise, sometimes is intended no more than a very distant period, but that is not their native primary signification. But the natural meaning of the word is a perpetual existence or infinite duration. Hence we read, The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: Deut. xxxiii. 27. Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord, my God? Hab. i. 12: If it be said the existence of Christ is limited, as being only from everlasting, or ever the earth was, and that, before the mountains were brought forth, or the highest part of the dust, were qualifying terms tending to establish a limited idea, therefore though Christ was from everlasting, yet not eternal; we answer, the Holy Ghost has taken care to guard his people against sophistry so dishonoring to Christ: for Moses, the Man of God, when treating on Jehovah's eternity, and human mortality, says, Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God; Ps. xc. 2. Again, thy throne is of old, thou art from everlasting. Ps. xciii. 2. See Mich. v. 2.



work he has performed, the worship he has received from angels and men, the divine names and titles which are given him, the honors ascribed to him, the unlimited confidence placed in him by good men in every age, and the claims which are made by him; for he, who was never the subject of arrogance, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; Phil. ii. 6. May the Lord grant that every reader may search the scriptures which testify of Jesus, with godly sincerity and gospel simplicity. To the upright, light shall rise in darkness. I might greatly enlarge; but it is hoped, that the above considerations may serve through the Divine blessing to remove the common difficulties respecting the true knowledge of, and faith in, the Redeemer's dignity as a person properly divine. My heart's desire is, that all the saints may be brought to rejoice in Jesus, as the mighty God, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the *Almighty*. Rev. i. 8.

## CHAPTER II.

### *Difficulties concerning the Love of God.*

THAT Jehovah changeth not, is a self-evident truth, a scripture axiom. "With him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning." Being perfection itself, therefore the properties of his nature, and purposes of his will, are absolutely unalterable. What he has determined, shall be done. "He is of one mind, and who can turn him?" For the counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations, and to Zion he says, he will rest in his love. He will rejoice over her with singing, for having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Notwithstanding the above and such like solemn declarations made by the God of truth, such objections have been raised against the unchangeableness of Jehovah's love, as greatly to perplex and stumble some who are evidently the distinguished objects of it.

As wrong conclusions may be drawn from principles which are unexceptionably right, so I apprehend many of those things are indisputable facts from whence the changeable nature of God's love is inferred; and indeed, it seems his people are more agreed in their primary principles, than in their conclusions. In the former there may be a happy union, though in the latter they widely differ, and cast stumbling-blocks in each other's way. For the exemplification and removal of which, as relating to the doctrine of divine love, it may be proper to

observe, that creatures who are now the objects of God's indignation, were once loved by him; those infernal spirits who kept not their first estate, though now the abhorred of the Lord, were, while innocent, the objects of his approbation; and the same may be said of man, considered as in his present state of corruption, and in his original state of perfection as created of God. John i. 1, 14; Phil. ii. 6, 7.

It is evident, God could not produce creatures morally defective, or disagreeable to himself; they were what he willed them to be, i. e. *good*, yea, *very good*, and as such were loved and delighted in, by their Maker. Every creature being Jehovah's production, therefore no creature was, in its original state, the object of his disapprobation: and yet many of them are now the declared objects of his *hatred* and *indignation*. From the above self-evident facts, it is inferred by some sincere inquirers after truth, that the love of God is changeable, and not invariably fixed on its objects; which inference has perplexed many of the people of God, and proved a stumbling-block in their way to a proper acquaintance with several very important truths in divine revelation. From this source various errors have proceeded, by which the glorious gospel of the grace of God has been beclouded, the faith of many Christians staggered, and their joy in Jesus and hope of glory greatly diminished. But that the above plausible inference is a false conclusion, (though drawn from undeniable facts,) will I hope be made plainly [to] appear, if we impartially survey the doctrine of Jehovah's love in the light of divine revelation.

The love of God, according to the scriptures, ought to be considered [under these distinctions, viz.] as NATURAL and as SOVEREIGN. The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and holiness is his perpetual delight. This love arises from the perfection and purity of his nature, and has for its object his own holy image, as enstamped upon his rational creatures; or in other words, in holy dispositions and corresponding acts, the Lord takes pleasure and delight. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity with approbation, or look on holiness with disgust. His hatred of sin, and love of purity, are not acts of divine sovereignty. Sin is not hateful because God willed it should be so, but is odious in its own nature to every pure being; and is therefore infinitely hateful to an *infinitely holy God*.

God does not hate sin, because he has by his law forbidden it; but has forbidden it, because it is what he *loathes*, as contrary to his holy nature. Perfect conformity to God, and supreme delight in him as the chief good, are enforced by God's holy law, because of their native excellency and pro-

priety. Holiness then, being the object of God's *natural* love, or essential approbation, and sin the reverse, it necessarily follows that every unholy creature is odious in the sight of God; therefore a creature having lost its purity, ceases to be the object of his natural approbation; yet the alteration is not in God, but in the creature, which is become, through moral impurity, what he abhors. God's natural love is still unalterably fixed on personal purity, wherever it is found; but in reference to a polluted creature, love has lost its object, that on which it was fixed being quite annihilated or destroyed.

Thus it appears that the various ranks of intelligent creatures were, in their original condition, interested in God's favor. Even those abominable beings, called devils, were, while holy, the objects of their Maker's love and approbation, as well as the angels who continue to shine in holy splendor and untainted purity. Though a part of the angelic world, and the whole human race, have, by their revolt from God, become vile, and cease to be the objects of the Lord's delight, yet there is no variability or change in Jehovah. But, to every proper object, "God is love;" 1 John. iv. 16; for God has no aversion to his creatures, simply considered as creatures; but on account of their moral depravity; nor does he necessarily love them, because they owe their existence to his sovereign will and almighty power; but as the subjects of his moral image, which consists in righteousness and true holiness. As all mankind have lost the image of God in which they were created, and become base and abominable in his sight, being *filthy* and *guilty* before him, they must have continued in a condition eternally disgusting to God, and in a state tremendously terrible to themselves, had not the Lord been pleased to show them kindness in a sovereign way; being graciously determined to save whom he thought proper, with an everlasting salvation. That love from which salvation springs is [not *natural* but] properly *sovereign*; [not *necessary* but] absolutely *free*. None are its objects because they deserved to be so, nor was God under any necessity of nature so to distinguish them; but it consisted in a voluntary determination to do good to the persons he sovereignly fixed upon as his people, with infinite and invariable delight.

If, then, we consider the *voluntary* love of the great Eternal as distinct from, and yet harmonizing with, that [*natural* and *necessary* love] of which we have been treating, difficulties, which otherwise are insurmountable, will disappear. That love which is *essential*, or natural to God, has personal holiness or pure principles for its invariable

object. But *sovereign* love fixed upon *persons*, without a regard had to their *dispositions* as its cause; which sovereign favor is entirely uninfluenced by their dispositions, and is beautifully illustrated by the Lord's voluntary favor to the person of Jacob, and the distinguished special privileges enjoyed by his posterity, without respect had to his having done either good or evil. Jacob have I loved, saith the Lord. Rom. ix. 13.\* And Moses, speaking of Israel as a chosen people, observes, The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people, (for ye were the fewest of all people,) but because the Lord loved you. Deut. vii. 7, 8. Such as it hath pleased the Lord to make his people, 1 Sam. xii. 22, may with humble joy and holy admiration say, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John iii. 1. This sovereign love of the Lord to his spiritual Israel, set apart his own son, Immanuel, as the head of his people, and gave their persons to him before the world was; and in time gave him to die for them. God sovereignly loved their persons, but abhorring their sinful conduct and criminal dispositions, was determined to remove that from them which he hated in them, and by creating them anew in Christ Jesus, or implanting holy and heavenly principles in their souls, to make them a holy people, that as such they might become the suitable, fit and proper objects of his natural, necessary, and essential love; which, as aforesaid, has holiness for its invariable object. Sovereign love having their persons only for its objects, without being excited by their dispositions, is therefore invariably the same, without addition or diminution. Hence all that is done for them, and wrought in them, is in consequence of, and according to that great love wherewith he loved them, even when they were dead in trespasses and sins. This sovereign love is the fruit of God's good pleasure, or the effect of gracious good-will to them. The utility and propriety of the above distinction, were it sufficiently attended to, would appear as bright as the sun in a clear meridian. I wish some able pen would undertake to investigate the subject more fully than either my talents or time will admit of. However, the few following remarks I hope may be of use to weak Christians, for whose sake I write, either to rectify their judgments—

\* The hatred of Esau, as opposed to the love of the Lord to Jacob, is not to be considered as implying any positive indignation to his person as a sinner; because the love and the hatred spoken of, was without their having done either good or evil; it only intends his not being loved as Jacob was. In this sense, hatred is to be understood in Deut. xxi. 15; Luke xxiv. 26; and John xii. 25.



stimulate their obedience—increase their joy,—or relieve their perplexity.

1. From the sacred oracles it appears, that God's necessary hatred to sin is not contrary to his sovereign love or gracious intentions to do good to his people, even while they are subjects of no other dispositions than what he abhors. If sovereign love to the sinner was inconsistent with his infinite hatred to sin, who then could be saved? For fallen men are, as such, become altogether abominable in the eyes of their holy Maker, the imagination of their hearts being, while unrenewed, evil, only evil, and that continually. "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good, no not one;" Psal. xiv. 1, 3; compared with Rom. iii. 9, 18. "We ourselves also, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." Tit. iii. 3. They who do such things are worthy of death, and likewise those who take pleasure in them that do them. Rom. i. 32. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God;" Rom. viii. 8. Nevertheless, "God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us;" Rom. v. 8. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" 1 John iv. 10. "In this was the love of God manifest." Ver. 9. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee;" Jer. xxxi. 3. Jesus when pleading with his Father on behalf of his chosen, says, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me, and thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John xvii. 23, 24. "We all had our conversation in times past in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even *when* we were dead in sins, hath quickened us, &c." Eph. ii. 3, 4, 5. Respecting their *persons* they were loved while in their sins; but [they were] not loved in reference to their *dispositions*. No; God *necessarily* hated, while he *sovereignly* loved. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared toward man; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" Tit. iii. 5. Being thus the workmanship of God created anew in Christ, the church becomes the object of the Lord's necessary love, or natural delight. As he saith, "I will call her beloved which was not beloved;" Rom. ix. 25.

2. Those who are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and possessed of holy principles, and are undeniably, as such, the objects of God's natural love, yet through sin become the objects of his holy displeasure. Nevertheless, that does not suppose, nor imply any change in Jehovah. Not in his *sovereign* good will, [which has regard] to their *persons*, and which is still the same, being the effect of his mere good pleasure, and not fixed on them because of any good moral quality in them. Nor is there any change in his natural love, because only *holiness* is its invariable object. Agreeably to, and in proof of the above, we read that though God *loved*, yet he greatly *abhorred* Israel, and was wroth with his inheritance. Ps. lxxviii. 59, 62. Being defiled with their own works, therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance;" Ps. cvi. 40. "Nevertheless he regarded them when he heard their cry;" ver. 44. "Yea, mine heritage, saith the Lord, is unto me as a lion in the forest, it crieth out against me, therefore I *hate* it. I *hate* the *dearly beloved* of my soul;" Jer. xii. 7, 8. "Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities;" yet sovereign grace breaks forth in Israel's favor, and Jehovah adds, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins;" Isaiah xliii. 24, 25. "I knew thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb. Yet, saith the Lord, for my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off; Isaiah xlviii. 8, 9. "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him, I hid me and was wroth, and he went on forwardly in the way of his heart." And was not the desperate sinner made a dreadful example of Divine displeasure? He must have been so, had not free exuberant grace interposed in his favor, saying, "I have seen his ways, and I will heal him," Isaiah lvii. 17, 18. Sovereign love triumphs in the sinner's salvation, through the merits of the Almighty Saviour, in a way which displays the infinite purity of Jehovah's nature and [his] unmerited favor. Sin gives many a mortal wound, but grace provides a cure.

Thus, from the example of God's conduct toward backsliding saints, we have striking proofs that neither God's natural nor [his] sovereign love change their objects. Holiness is the invariable object of the former, and the persons of his people the objects of the latter. I might add, all the good which sovereign grace does work, or implant in the human heart, meets with God's necessary approbation in all its genuine operations. He attends to the language of penitence with pleasure. He

says of mourning Ephraim, whom he heard bemoaning himself, "My bowels are troubled for him, and I earnestly remember him still." With what melting pity does he address the soul that seeks for solitude to lament its doleful condition? "O my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rocks; let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Song ii. 14. Sovereign love having given sight to the soul which was before blind to the beauties of Immanuel, to Jesus it now looks and loves; and he being delighted with the exercise of grace, says, "Thou hast ravished my heart, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes; how fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is thy love than wine; and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!" Song iv. 10. The productions of sovereign grace God naturally loves, and therefore takes pleasure in them that fear him, in them who hope in his mercy. Ps. cxlvii. 11. Once more:

3. Of that love which is essential to the nature of God, good men are not equally the objects; for as no man is its object but in consequence of being the subject of holiness, therefore a growth in grace, or in holy obedience, will ever meet with God's increasing approbation. Christ, as man, though ever pure, "increased in favor with God;" Luke ii. 92. "Therefore doth my Father love me (said Jesus) because I laid down my life;" John x. 17. "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him. If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 21, 23. "For the Father himself loveth you, *because* ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God;" John xvi. 27. "Keep yourselves in the love of God; Jude, verse 21. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love;" John xv. 9, 10. Though all regenerate persons are evidently the equal objects of special sovereign favor, and with them, as in Christ, the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; Isaiah xlii. 21, and their persons are accepted in the beloved; yet with many of them the Lord is not well pleased, with respect to the temper of their hearts, and manner of life. See 1 Cor. x. 4, 5. Therefore "only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ." "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to

walk, and to *please* God, so ye would abound more and more;" Phil. i. 27. 1 Thess. iv. 1. "Knowing that your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. xv. 58. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love;" Heb. vi. 10. From the above we may infer:

1. That the everlasting damnation of those who kept not their first estate in which they enjoyed the Divine approbation, does not oppose the unchangeable nature of Jehovah's love, nor render the eternal salvation of his people precarious or uncertain.

2. How carefully should every saint watch against every sin, and strive to grow in perfect conformity to his God. True happiness will ever be found inseparably connected with real holiness; and sin, wherever it is, will invariably remain the object of God's displeasure. On the account of this he hides his face, and is wroth with his people; and though he pardon them, yet he will take vengeance on their inventions; for whom he loveth he chasteneth.

3. How awfully miserable must our condition have been, having lost that rectitude of nature in which God delighted, had he not proceeded towards us in a way of sovereign grace, choosing us in, and committing our persons to the care of his own Son, laying our iniquities upon him, and punishing him for them, and justifying us on his account, conveying holiness, pardon and peace, through him, to make us pure and spotless before his throne! There, in that world of bliss, God, in all his essential glories, will be forever enjoyed the same as though sin had never been; with additional pleasures arising from the amazing infinite source of sovereign spontaneous favor. The hearts of the redeemed will be ravished, their powers of mind animated, and their elevated songs make heaven's high arches ring with the joyful acclamation of, *Salvation to our God and the Lamb*. A full evidence of the infinite desert of sin, which seems to be intended by the smoke of the furnace ascending before the throne, will heighten their admiration of sovereign love, and fill their capacious souls with unspeakable joy, profound reverence, and holy wonder.

4. Opposition to the sovereign grace of God is truly lamentable. How mournful to think that poor condemned criminals should be filled with enmity against that, in consequence of which, only, salvation can become the object of hope. It is a striking proof of the deceitful and infatuating nature of sin, and the pride of the human heart.



## CHAPTER III.

*The Doctrine of Election.*

SOME upright minds, being subject to discouragements through misapprehensions which are often the fruit of misrepresentations of truth, I shall [now] attend to another subject nearly connected with the above, at the very name of which some professors are startled, though it is frequently met with in the scriptures of truth. [This subject is the doctrine of Election.]

1. Election or choice always implies freedom of will in the person or persons who choose or elect. Constraint or compulsion is incompatible with, and opposite to choice, which must be voluntary or not at all.

2. Every elector has an end in view, in respect of which he makes his choice, or for the accomplishment of which the choice is made.

3. The person chosen is always considered as passive, being entirely at the will of the elector, so far as relates to the act of choosing.

These three ideas are inseparably connected with election, or a proper choice, whatever kind of election we refer to, whether made by God or man. But some young or weak Christians have confused or discouraging ideas of the doctrine now under consideration, for want of attending to the different senses in which the scriptures speak of persons being the chosen, or the elect of God. Of this ignorance or inattention the opposers of sovereign grace take the advantage; and in order to perplex or prejudice their minds, produce scripture instances of some who were *elected*, and nevertheless perished in their sins, as there is reason to think Saul and Judas did, and yet both of them were chosen of God. Hence it is inferred, that as some are lost who were elected, therefore election does not secure the salvation of those who are chosen, but is of such a nature as to leave their future happiness and final felicity entirely precarious. As such inferences as the above, at the first view, wear the appearance of truth, it is no wonder that some gracious persons are indifferent about the doctrine. But the apostle exhorts Christians to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, by being able to produce such evidences as may demonstrate their personal interest in Jehovah's choice: the knowledge of which, in the judgment of Jesus, is calculated to produce in his people greater pleasure than they ought to take from the evidence of devils being in subjection to them. To have hell vanquished must afford unutterable joy to those who wrestle with the powers of darkness;

"notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, (saith the Lord,) but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Luke x. 20. For the relief of serious inquirers after the truth, it may be proper to observe, that by Election, in scripture is sometimes intended God's setting apart, or choosing a people, to the enjoyment of peculiar external privileges; in that sense he chose the Jewish nation, and therefore they as a nation, notwithstanding their wickedness, are frequently called the Lord's elect, or chosen people. Again, the Lord hath elected, or chosen particular persons to act in office capacity; as Samuel, Saul, David, and many more under the Old Testament; and Peter, James, Judas, and others, were chosen, or elected in like manner under the New. Hence Jesus said to his disciples, "Have not I chosen you twelve? and one of you is a devil."

But the election of grace, of which I am treating, is of a different nature, and consists in God's choosing of persons in Christ Jesus, or setting them apart as in connection with him, to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. Salvation was the end God had in view; to bring his chosen to the possession and enjoyment of *salvation*, not only as consisting in a deliverance from punishment, but from all iniquity. Therefore in the definition the apostle gives of the doctrine, sanctification by the Spirit, and a true faith, were what these persons were chosen to be the subjects of, through which only, salvation could be enjoyed. This choice was from the beginning, or ever the earth was. They were not chosen, because they were viewed as holy, and therefore deserving to be distinguished as God's favorites, on account of their obedience or personal purity, but that they *should* be holy. The great apostle, in his deep, but delightful epistle to the saints at Ephesus, treats of the important subject in so full, plain, and accurate a manner, as to answer almost every pertinent query that can be made respecting the doctrine. He begins with expressions of fervid affection and humble gratitude to its infinite Author, saying, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. 1. What hath he done?

A. Who hath blessed us.

Q. 2. With what hath he blessed us?

A. With all spiritual blessings.

Q. 3. Where are those blessings deposited?

A. In Christ.

Q. 4. Where may seeking souls expect to find and enjoy them?

A. In heavenly places (or things.)

Q. 5. According to what does he pro-

ceed in the bestowment of such special privileges: is it owing to our choice of him?

A. No; but according as he hath chosen us in him.

Q. 6. When?

A. Before the foundation of the world.

Q. 7. But did he choose us because we were holy, or because he foresaw we would be so?

A. No; but that we *should* be holy.

Q. 8. Did he then intend that all such should be made completely holy?

A. Yes, and without blame before him in love.

Q. 9. And is every thing aforesaid absolutely secured?

A. Yes, having predestinated us.

Q. 10. Predestinated to what?

A. Unto the adoption of children.

Q. 11. By, and to whom?

A. By Jesus Christ to himself.

Q. 12. What is the source of such favors, or from whence do they flow?

A. The good pleasure of his will.

Q. 13. In what does the whole terminate, or to what does it lead?

A. To the praise of the glory of his grace.

Wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. See Eph. i. 4th to the 12th. Again, the same inspired writer asserts, such were "chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. ii. 13. God kindly connected their final felicity and his own eternal glory, when he ordained them to eternal life. Acts xiii. 48. But though Judas was chosen to office, he was not chosen to holiness, for Jesus, when speaking to the disciples as his servants and true followers (Judas being present) he said, I speak not of you all. I know whom I have chosen. John xiii. 18. The names of his chosen are written in heaven, and all such are freed from condemnation.

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Rom. viii. 33. All this could not [with propriety] be said, of the Jewish nation, nor of Judas, and many more who have been chosen [merely] to office: besides, individuals are called the elect, who could not bear rule in the church of God; for a woman was not suffered to speak in the church, nor usurp authority over the man, but was to be in silence. 1 Tim. ii. 12. Yet we read of an elect lady and her elect sister. 2 John i. 13. If God hath thus chosen, the end he had in view will certainly be accomplished, for saith Jesus, "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "His people shall be willing in the day of his power,"

for having "loved them with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness will he draw them." No one instance can be given of God having chosen any *people, person, or place*, to that which was not actually accomplished. Did the Lord choose the Jewish nation to peculiar privileges? Yes, and in consequence of that choice they had the advantage of all other nations, and much every way. *Samuel* did actually prophesy, and *Saul* and *David* were really kings in Israel. *Judas* was actually numbered with the apostles, and with them took part of the *ministry* to which he was *elected*. *Moses* was Israel's leader, and lawgiver, because he was chosen by the Lord to such dignity. *Aaron* and his *descendants* were priests of the most high God, because they were *elected* by him to that office. So the Lord chose *Jerusalem* as the residence of the *ark*, and the place where *sacrifices* should be offered; and thither the tribes of Israel actually repaired to worship, and adore him whose *dwelling was in Zion*. In no one instance did *Jehovah* choose in vain. The ends he had in view were ever accomplished. And if so, can there be any reason assigned why those, and those only who were *chosen* to the *greatest* blessings, should fall short of them? But the foundation standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. In every age "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" "the election obtained it, but the rest were blinded" by "the god of this world, who blindeth the eyes of them who believe not." "So then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace, and if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace." Rom. xi. 5, 6.

Another stumbling-block in the way of many inquirers, next to the doctrine of election, is *reprobation*, which is generally [but improperly] considered as the counterpart of election, and related to it as its direct opposite; as a negative, is related to a positive idea. But if it be understood as the negative of election, is it not strange it should change its nature, and, in controversy, become a positive idea? And yet as such it has been [both] opposed and defended with great warmth; for the adversaries of sovereign grace scarcely ever directly encounter the doctrine of election; but artfully file off to reprobation, as if they were conscious [that] election was itself invulnerable, and could not possibly be reduced. But from the mountain of reprobation they attack the doctrine intended to be demolished, and charge it with the most horrid consequences, too shocking to relate. These consequences the defenders of sovereign grace have repeatedly



proved to be quite foreign to, and not in the least inferable from, the doctrine of God's sovereign choice of his people to grace and glory. But perhaps their defence of the doctrine of reprobation has not been equally successful. [And no wonder; they have unwarily admitted it to be the opposite of election; and this admission] has been stumbling to many inquirers after truth, and encouraging to its opposers. Election or choice, indeed, implies a negative, or that some are not chosen; which the scripture calls the *rest*: this is readily allowed, but reprobation as mentioned in scripture is never opposed to election. To the doctrine of election it does not seem related, but stands in a quite different situation in the system of scriptural divinity.

1. If reprobation conveyed the idea of non-election, by a person being reprobated, we should understand one not elected; but how will such an idea comport with the apostle's reasoning, when he says, "Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. xv. 15. To suppose him to mean they were not elected if Christ was not in them, is supposing him to contradict his own experience, and oppose self-evident facts; for there was a time when Christ was not in Paul himself; during which period he was exceeding mad against those who professed the name of Jesus. But, says he, "it pleased God to reveal his Son in me." *Before* this happy change took place he was in a state of *reprobation*, for Christ was not in him, and yet he was never in a state of *non-election*, but was one chosen in Christ before the world was. Again, he could not mean if Christ was not in them they were not elected, because Christ is not naturally in his elect, as most of them know; and [they] lament, when called by grace, that they lived without God and without Christ in the world; therefore, during that period, they were *reprobates*, not having Christ in them; nevertheless they were the elect of God, of which their being called by grace is a proof. From hence it appears that reprobation is not the opposite of election.

2. That reprobation is not the opposite of election will appear evident, if it be considered that election is an act of divine sovereignty, arising merely from the will of God, without any fitness in creatures deserving to be so distinguished; but reprobation, whenever the word is used in scripture, respects a comparative deficiency, or an essential defect in those who are reprobated. Election is the effect of, or entirely flows from the good pleasure of God's will in favor of the *persons* of his people; but reprobation originates not *merely* from God's will, but from the natural contrariety

there is between Jehovah's *purity* and their *pollution*.

3. *Reprobation* in scripture always stands opposed to, and is the natural negative of, *approbation*, whether it respects the *state* of a person, the *frame* of his mind, or the *nature* of his actions. Hence, vile professors are compared to the alloy or dross frequently mixed with metal, which on trial is found base or deficient in quality; therefore "reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord has rejected them." Jer. vi. 30. So in the text before mentioned, "Know ye not that Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?" the apostle's obvious meaning is, that such are *destitute of real worth*. For however splendid a profession be, yet without Christ, all will be found mere *refuse* at last; therefore he puts them upon close examination, lest they should be deceived by appearances, *Thinking themselves something, while in fact they are nothing*. Hence in the next verse he adds, "But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates." 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 6; and in verse 7, he says, "Now I pray to God that ye do no evil, not that we should appear *approved*, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as *reprobates*." Thus he considers *reprobation* and *approbation* as natural opposites. Again, men of corrupt minds are said to be "*reprobate concerning the faith*," i. e. destitute of a true understanding of the truth. 2 Tim. iii. 8. And the "abominable and disobedient are unto every good work *reprobate*." Tit. i. 16. Agreeable, therefore, to this view of reprobation, those vile affections to which the Gentiles were given up, are called "*a reprobate mind*." Rom. i. 26, 28, 29. Meaning that their *dispositions and conduct* were odious, and could not possibly be *approved* of, either by God or good men. From the above considerations it evidently appears, that election and reprobation are not inseparably connected, nor even so much as related as *kindred* ideas, and that reprobation does not intend an absolute appointment to eternal misery, for such may still find mercy as Paul did; but that it is the awful opposite to divine approbation, whether it respects *persons, principles, or proceedings*.

But some may reply, Though the term *reprobation* should be disused as relating to election, yet if the ideas be retained which were conveyed by it, the doctrine is not less exceptionable than before. True; therefore, let us calmly consider whether those *horrid* ideas, which the opposers of election have always connected with the term reprobation, are, or are not, as foreign to the doctrine of election as the term itself. The most decent and sober opposers of the

doctrine in question, generally charge it with implying three things: 1. An appointment to inevitable destruction of those who are not elected; therefore, 2. That the doctrine of election is injurious to those not included in it; and consequently, 3. Is a reflection on the justice or moral character of God. These reasons, it is confessed, are quite sufficient to justify a dissent from the doctrine, or an opposition to it, *supposing* them well founded. But whether these awful inferences are the *genuine* offspring of election or not will appear, if brought under impartial examination.

1. Respecting the first objection, the question is, Whether the doctrine of election (supposing it a fact) be the cause of, or in the least influential upon, an appointment of any creature to destruction? That it was neither the *cause* nor the *occasion* of such an appointment is demonstrably evident from its very nature. It could not have such a tendency, because election is an act absolutely sovereign, or a gracious act arising simply from Jehovah's will. But punishment does not arise from divine sovereignty. If it did, it would be *causeless*; but God never punished (therefore never intended to do so) without a criminal cause in the creature. God does not punish for sin because it was his *sovereign* will; but his very will to punish arises from the *holiness* of his nature and the *equity* of his government; therefore God's intention to punish arises from a distinct *source* from that out of which election springs. They are in their nature eternally distinct, as any acts of God can possibly be. Such a charge, therefore, might as well be brought against *creation* as *election*. It seems very strange that any serious person should oppose the idea of God's *decreting* to punish for sin, seeing he actually does so, which he could not, if it was an unrighteous thing in God to take vengeance. If it be right for the Lord to punish those who are punished by him, it could not be wrong to *resolve* to do so, unless it be *wrong* to *determine* to do what is right. However, such a decree does not arise from election. What is opposite to election, is a mere negation, or a leaving others in that state in which all men are viewed by the great Eternal when he chose his people: therefore,

2. The doctrine is not injurious to those not included in it; for if election respected its objects as *sinless*, or simply considered as creatures formed of God, which some think, seeing the happy angels and the person of Christ were included in Jehovah's choice, those *from* among whom they were chosen could not be deemed *punishable*, being considered in their *pure* unfallen state; therefore election, if so considered, could not in the nature of things, be the *cause* or

*occasion* of God's designing to punish any man. If the election of men be considered as a choice of *criminal* creatures, or of creatures considered as in a *sinful* fallen state, in which light it is viewed by many, because the choice is *unto salvation through sanctification of the spirit*, (however, the different stating of the doctrine is only a circumstance which does not alter the nature of the truth stated, for if it be thus considered,) it unavoidably follows, that as those *not* included in the sovereign choice, were viewed by God as *sinful* when the choice was made; therefore the choice could not possibly *make* them sinful nor *cause* them to be viewed as criminals. It is singularly absurd to suppose the *prescience* of God, or his all-comprehending understanding, to be the fruit of his sovereign will; and yet this absurdity, gross as it is, attends the objection, which is the same as saying, if God had not elected some, he would never have known or thought of the condition of others. As no injury is done to any man by the doctrine in question, therefore,

3. It is not contrary to, or an impeachment of, the moral character of God. In election there is no connivance at sin implied. By it, sin in the chosen was not rendered *less* odious, nor justice *partially* administered in their favor, but a surety was graciously substituted in their stead, who bore their sins, and was wounded for their transgressions, and by whose obedience the law of God was magnified, and through his death impartial justice shone with tremendous lustre. Had the crimes of which the elect was guilty been *transferred* or *imputed* to those who perish, in that case an *exemption* of the elect from punishment would have been *unjust* and *injurious*, because *mercy* shown to *them* would have heightened the *misery* of *others*. But as every one who perishes suffers only according to the demerit of his own personal sins, therefore to infer that the doctrine of election is *detrimental* to man, and *unworthy* of God, discovers either *pitiable* weakness, or *powerful* prejudice; for such inferences seem as opposite to truth, decency and common sense, as a man would appear to be, if he undertook to prove that God is *cruel* because he is *kind*, and that those have great cause to *complain* who were never *injured*. That the doctrine is not inimical to Christian experience, but of contrary tendency, will be shown in its proper place. What has been said I hope may tend to remove the objections against it,\* as a revealed

\* The following condensed view of the doctrine of election, may, perhaps, not be unacceptable to the young Christian.

1. There is a manifest difference among mankind in their moral and religious character;—a difference which



truth of great importance, in consequence of which Christ and his people were so *connected* that what he did was *imputable* to them.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *Union to Christ.*

THOUGH the Scriptures speak with remarkable plainness of the near relation subsisting between Christ and his church, in consequence of electing love, yet various stumbling-blocks are frequently found in the way of [those who desire] clear views of that doctrine; for the removal of which, if God please to bless the attempt, let us now briefly consider, [that relation to Christ which is expressed by the title of the present chapter.]

Various warm disputes have existed among the people of God about union to Christ, particularly as relating to its commencement, which is thought by some to have been from everlasting, and by others not till, or after believing. Though agreed in the main about its nature and duration, each side has been pretty free, and fertile in the invention of consequences, as arising from their opponents' sentiments, which [consequences,] perhaps, are equally abhorrent to both. On this account, many sincere inquirers after truth have been greatly discouraged, wounded in their minds, and prevented making progress in religious attainments. Some are likewise perplexed and stumbled by a *third* party, who, differing from the other about the na-

ture of the union, therefore deny its *durability*, and maintain that those who are in *Christ to-day* may possibly be in *hell to-morrow*. Perhaps the doctrine of union with Christ may be of such a *copious* and *complex* nature, as to justify in some measure the sentiment of *each*, who viewing the subject in *detached* parts only, therefore may conclude some things are *opposite*, which are, in fact, only *distinct*. However, so far as that may be the case with common Christians, an impartial survey, or review of the subject, may have a conciliating tendency; for which purpose it should be considered, that union to Christ is of a threefold nature, which may (for the sake of keeping ideas distinct) be denominated, *visible, vital, and virtual*.

First; By *visible*, is intended a credible profession of Christ, joined with an apparent subjection to him, or an embracing his gospel, and obeying his laws. Where there appears love to Jesus, and subjection to him as a *Saviour*, and a *Sovereign*, we are *bound* to consider such persons as related to him, and to love them accordingly. The apostle, treating of the visible church as in union with Christ, founded on profession, says, We being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Rom. xii. 5. And speaking of the churches of Judea, he adds, which were in Christ. Gal. i. 22. To be therefore *in the church* by a credible profession, was called a being *in Christ*, as in 1 Cor. xii. 2. See Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. xii. 13. Yet it is evident that the apostle did not account all were true believers which were in Christ by profession, though he was bound in charity to hope thus of them all, till there was evidence to the contrary. The inspired penmen did not certainly know the gracious state of the persons they addressed, but had cheering hopes and distressing fears, respecting those to whom they ministered. See Epist. to Gal. Even Jesus, "who *knew* what was in man," generally, as a minister, addressed his own people by such terms as were descriptive of gracious dispositions; Matt. v. As many are in Christ only by a profession, having a name to live, and are dead, therefore there is a striking propriety in the various *ifs* we meet with in scripture, when promises and encouragements are treated of, which *ifs* do not imply an uncertainty of a true believer's future happiness; but an uncertainty respecting *who* the persons are that have believed through grace. With what jealousy does Paul speak of the Galatian churches, and of many in that of Corinth; and with what caution does Peter mention one whom he greatly valued, "Sylvanus, a faithful brother, as I suppose." 2 Pet. v. 12. The visible kingdom of Christ is compared to a

is not merely external, but apparently, *radical* and essential: some are the subjects of real, vital piety, of which others are entirely destitute.

2. As every effect must originate in some cause, so this difference in men's characters is an effect of some cause, and the Scriptures attribute it to God; Eph. ii. 3, 5. "We were by nature children of wrath even as others; but God—*hath quickened us.*"

3. As God is the author of this difference, he has, doubtless, in producing it, acted like an intelligent and wise being. But such a Being does not act till he has determined to act; and each act is part of a plan of operation: therefore, before God produced this difference in men's characters, he determined to produce it, and the change produced, is part of his great plan of operations; i. e. what he has done in time, he has resolved to do before time began: he determined, then, to effect the very change he has effected, and in the very persons in whom he has effected it; (Rom. viii. 29, 30,) and this determination is election.

From this it will be seen that, election has absolutely *no bearing* upon any but the saved; it does not touch, or at all regard others;—no more than if they had not any being. It leaves them exactly as they were, and as they would have been if there had been no election at all.

From an inspection of the passage just referred to, in connection with the above remarks, it will be seen, also, that so far from election securing the salvation of any, irrespective of character and piety, their *character* is one object regarded in their election; and election secures that it shall be holy; (Eph. i. 4.) Election, as we have seen, was the determination that there should be a *difference* in conduct and character between its objects and others: and that they should be sanctified in spirit, by the belief of the truth. 2. Thes. ii. 13.

net which encloseth divers kinds; but the Lord, who searcheth the heart, will take care of the good, and cast the bad away. Then many who were visibly in connection with Christ, who ate and drank in his presence, who were the children of the kingdom, and visible members of his body, the church, will be cast out; so that those who are found fruitless branches in Christ, will be broken off, and burned with unquenchable fire. Therefore it is granted that many who are in Christ, in [this] sense, [i. e. *visibly*,] may notwithstanding lift up their eyes in hell, being in torment.

Secondly; there is a *vital* union, or a divine connection between Christ and his people, which takes place at regeneration, when the soul is made to hear the voice of the Son of God and live; for the Son quickeneth whom he will. Hence the apostle says, "I live; yet not I, but Christ which liveth in me." To *live* implies three things, all which, in a spiritual sense, every true Christian is the subject of, viz. SENSATION, ANIMATION, PRESERVATION.

1. SENSATION. They *feel* the burden of guilt, and are *sensible* of the plague of their own hearts. They are convinced of their wants and weakness, and are conscious of being in a condition both mean and miserable. They see their own deformity and Jehovah's beauty. Their ears are open to receive instruction; and the voice of God in his word, whether *terrific* or *tender*, makes *deep* and *durable* impressions on their minds. They have a taste for the things of religion, after which they hunger and thirst. To them Christ is precious: his name is an ointment poured forth, his beauty is as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon; yea, he is altogether lovely. All their *spiritual* sensations, whether painful or pleasurable, are in consequence, of *living* union with Jesus; for prior to its commencement they were dead in sin, and destitute of every holy emotion and perception.

2. ANIMATION. Christian *activity* is entirely owing to Christ's *animative* influence. Through his Spirit and all-sufficient grace, they *serve* with pleasure, or *suffer* with patience; they strive and war against sin, and wrestle with principalities and powers, over all which they are more than conquerors through him who hath loved them. Yea, they can do all things through Christ strengthening them, and without him they can do nothing.

3. PRESERVATION. The principle of *animation* ever discovers an inclination to *preserve* its connection with that which is animated by it: this is obvious not only in rational life, but even in animal likewise. So, Christ has always discovered an entire, infinite inclination to keep and preserve his people in connection with himself. He

influences them to love, and labor for the meat which perisheth not. He alarms their fears that they may *escape* danger, and strengthens their faith that they may *lay hold* of eternal life, *secures* their love by fresh discoveries of divine *beauties*, and the suitableness of celestial objects to *heaven-born* souls. Thus he *draws* them in the paths of duty by the bands of love, and by the cords of a man. He is the *author* of their *preservation*, in such a way as to prevent presumption, and secure their attention to appointed means, which Divine wisdom has connected with the desired end. He says he never will leave them, but will be with them always to the end of the world; and writes his law in their hearts, that they might not finally depart from him. He saves them, therefore, not *contrary* to their *inclination*, but with their *free* consent, and *fervent* desire. He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit; 1 Cor. vi. 17. Between Jesus and them, there is a oneness in *perception*, *affection*, *interest* and *end*. As they are precious to him, so he is precious to them; the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. His interest is theirs, and theirs is his. He rejoiceth in the prosperity of his people, and they esteem Jerusalem, i. e. his cause on earth, above their chief joy; his revealed *designs* correspond with their real *desires*. The *destruction* of sin and the *perfection* of purity they long for. He gave his life for them, neither do they count theirs too dear to sacrifice on his behalf; their life therefore is in their hand, ready to be delivered up at their Saviour's call. They rejoice in Jesus on account of his mediatorial obedience, not only as it is their security from condemnation, but as it does infinite honor to Heaven's righteous law. What Christ has done, intentionally centres, and will ultimately terminate, in the vindication of God's moral government, and the eternal display of Jehovah's essential perfections, in all their native beauty, and infinite excellency, grandeur, and glory, that God, to whom sinners have an aversion, *may appear* and be *acknowledged*; not only by angels, but by men, as *all in all*. As influenced by grace, the true believer says, "Oh, how I love thy law!" "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Jehovah he *admires* and *adores*; and when he takes a solemn view of the great Eternal, whose glory dazzles angelic eyes, he is *astonished*, *confounded*, and *lost*, in *pleasing wonder*. He sinks into profound contempt of himself, and feels keen reflections on his criminal want of affection to, and departures from a Being so infinitely deserving the supreme love of men and angels. But on the revival of hope, with humble reverence, and holy rapture, he sings, "*The Lord is my portion, saith my*



soul. *He is my rock and fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength, my buckler, my salvation, and my high tower.* In his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand are pleasures forevermore. Then shall I be satisfied, when I awake in his likeness." Though conscious of meanness and demerit, his language now is, "Will he plead against me with his great power? No, but he will put strength into me." "I know whom I have believed. He hath said, My grace shall be sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness. The Lord will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

As such souls freely give themselves unto the Lord, so he receives them graciously, and rejoiceth in them as his *spouse, his property, and portion*; it is his will, and their desire to be like him, and with him for ever; and for them to die is gain. Therefore, though shoals of professors perish, none who are possessors of his grace ever shall. Their *internal* life is *eternal* in its *duration*; for thus saith the Lord, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." John x. 28. "He that believeth on him is not condemned." John iii. 18. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 1. As there is no condemnation to such *now*, there never shall be any. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth, shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. John v. 24. Whoso believeth on him, shall not perish, but have eternal life. John iii. 15, 16. They shall never die; though they were dead, yet shall they live. John xi. 25. Who shall separate them from the love of Christ? Rom. viii. 35. Whose Spirit is in them as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. John iv. 14. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Those, therefore, who are *vitality* united to Christ, cannot *lose* their spiritual life while he *maintains* his own; for he hath said, "Because I live ye shall live also." Being *bought* by his precious blood, and *kept* by almighty power, they therefore may conclude with the apostle, "That when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory."

There is, therefore, no real contradiction in the declarations in scripture, though they may to some appear opposite, respecting the *final* state of those who are united to Christ; for salvation is not *inseparably* connected with a *visible*, but with a *vital* union to the Son of God. Those who perish never were spiritually in Christ: he was

never the home of their hearts. They never *approved* of him, nor he of them; therefore he will say to all that shall be doomed to destruction, I never knew you. Though they may have been *among* the saints, yet such were never *of* them; but of a contrary character all the while. Hence of apostates the apostle thus speaks: "They went out from us, but they were not of us, for *if* they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us, but ye have an unction from the *Holy One*," &c. 1 John ii. 19, 20. Thus it appears, that a *visible* and a *vital* union to Christ are very *distinct*; and yet they are not *opposites*, for a *profession* of Christ cannot be deemed *contrary* to a *possession* of him.

Thirdly, Vital union is distinct from *virtual*, though one is not contrary or opposite to the other. By *virtual* union with Christ, is intended a real connection subsisting between him and the *elect* of God considered simply as such. That there was such a connection *antecedent* to vital union, is evident from the following considerations. They were chosen in Christ, and given to him; in covenant he represented them as a federal head. He became a *surety* for them, and on their behalf was made *under the law*, in consequence of which there was a *legal* connection of union established between *him* and *them*. The *substitution* of his person under the law in their stead, was the ground of the *imputation* of their sins to him, and of his obedience for them. What he did and endured, would have had no *efficacy* in *their* favor, had they not been personally interested in him. Their sins could not have been done away by the sacrifice of himself, had he not given himself *for them* in particular or died *in their stead*. But as their kinsman-Redeemer, he ransomed them from death, and as the Head of the church, he became the Saviour of the body. Thus was he related to his chosen, as their head of representation; and, as their surety, by his gracious engagements and condescending substitution of his person [to endure the penalties of the law] in their place, and by his performing for them what was required of them, he became *the Lord their righteousness*, and by his death he procured on their behalf an eternal exemption from deserved punishment, and a legal title to everlasting bliss. In consequence of this union, the elect were intrusted to his care, and were *preserved in Christ Jesus*, and, therefore, *called to be saints*. By virtue of the aforesaid connection, they are said to be his sheep, whom he must bring; for of all that the Father hath given him, he will lose none: and from thence ariseth the propriety of the apostle's

language in Eph. ii. 4, 6: "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even *when we were dead in sins*, hath quickened us *together with Christ*, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit *together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Now as this *virtual* union does not supersede *vital*, or render it *unnecessary*, but is the secret *source* from whence it flows, why then should the godly quarrel one with another about what is so evidently consistent? Though *fruit* be only found in the *branches*, yet the *root* is surely not unprofitable, seeing from thence the sap of the tree proceeds. According to this simile we may observe, what the scripture calls *bringing forth fruit unto God*, can only be expected among professors of religion, who are in Christ as visible branches. But even amongst them, will no fruit be found without sap or living nourishment; and there can be no vital nourishment, but in consequence of union with the root. As none ever imagine there is *no* connection between the *root* and *branches* of a tree till blossoms appear, why then should any think there is no connection between Christ the root of the righteous, and his people, *before* the appearance of grace? It is owing to the appearance of gracious dispositions, that a relation to Christ is discovered, or claimable by any person whatever; nevertheless, the union or relation in the last sense in which we have been speaking, does not then commence. If there was no *previous* secret connection with Christ, from whence did grace proceed to the soul? It must have a source or original cause. The apostle observes all spiritual blessings were given us in Christ. Eph. i. 3. If Christ was intrusted with all spiritual blessings to communicate to his people, then *no* spiritual blessing is ever possessed, but what flows from him; and if so, there must be a *prior* connection with him. Believers have reason gratefully to acknowledge that they all have received out of his fulness, grace for grace. John i. 16. To the hesitating soul we would recommend a close consideration of the apostle's query; "What hast thou, that thou didst not receive." 1 Cor. iv. 7.

The doctrine of *union* between Christ and his church is of a nature so *copious*, that no one metaphor can *properly* represent it; therefore in the scriptures we meet with *various* similitudes, tending to illustrate the important subject. Christ is frequently compared to a *foundation*, on which his people are built; but that conveying only the idea of *support*, therefore he is compared to a *root*, by which the idea of *influence* is likewise illustrated. But though *branches* are influenced, and rendered fruitful, in consequence of conveyed nourishment, yet Christian *activity* is not thereby properly

represented: to supply this defect, Christ and his people are farther illustrated by the union subsisting between *head* and *members*. But though the idea of *activity* is thereby conveyed, there is still a material defect, for the relation between these is quite *involuntary*. Had it been otherwise, the *head* might possibly have chosen better *feet*, or better *hands*; and had *they* been the subject of distinct volition, they would, probably, have chosen to have been in union with a better *head*: therefore to supply the deficiency of the above simile, and to include the idea of *mutual choice* and *social endearments*, Christ and his church are compared to *husband* and *wife*. If then we are in such near and close connection with the blessed Jesus, as the scriptures assert, and, by so many significant similitudes, illustrate his own people to be, let us frequently think of, and bless God for, that *sovereign* and *inseparable* love which constituted the relation. It is all of God, as is devoutly acknowledged by that sweet singer in our British Israel, the late Dr. Watts, who of the Father's love and choice thus speaks:

"Christ be my first elect, he said,  
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head;  
Nor shall our souls be thence remov'd,  
Till he forgets his first belov'd."

## CHAPTER V.

### *Relation to God.*

As there are unhappy differences among the professors of religion about union to Christ, so in like manner they are subject to cast stumbling-blocks in each other's way respecting relation to God.

For the removal of these, and the purpose of reconciliation, let us consider *on what*, relation to God is founded. That relation in which God's people stand unto himself, distinct from others, according to the scripture, arises from *adoption* and *regeneration*. Adoption is a taking those into the relation of sons, and treating them as such, who are not so by nature. Now God's people were all by nature aliens; but, by adopting grace, [they] were by him considered as his children. Again, His people are all his children by *birth*; being born again, they possess or partake of his nature, as it consists in righteousness and true holiness, and so bear his image. Adoption constitutes relation, but does not convey likeness of nature; but regeneration does both. Adoption is before or antecedent to regeneration, for there is no propriety in supposing those are made sons by adoption who are so by birth. No man ever



adopted his own son; those who are sons by nature, need not to be made sons by adoption. Though the persons who *are* regenerated were adopted, yet they were not adopted *as* regenerate, but when they were in a state of alienation from God. In which state all men are by nature, as the descendants of an apostate head. Adoption is therefore the taking those into the relation of children, who are not so by nature, or reckoning, or accounting those sons, who are not, [as yet, such] by regeneration. Relation by adoption is, therefore, quite distinct from sonship arising from regeneration, or a being generated, and born anew; and accordingly we find it treated of as a separate subject in the word of God. Adoption is an act of God's sovereign will according to Eph. i. 5, 6. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise and glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Regeneration is the work of his power, it is a manifest change of soul produced by his Holy Spirit. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. iii. 5. The people of God, considered as children by adoption, were the subjects of redemption. Being, through sin, in a state of distance and dreadful captivity, Christ gave his life a ransom for them. "He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring them to God." Hence those who were sometime afar off are made nigh by the blood of his Son. It was therefore expedient that Christ should die for the people, and gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. John xi. 50, 52. For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Heb. ii. 10. They were not redeemed, considered as *saints*, but as *sinners*; not redeemed as *children*, by *regeneration*, but as *sons* by *adoption*; and of them, as such, Christ will at last say "Father, here am I and the children which thou hast given me." The application of redeeming love, and the possession of the Redeemer's *purchase* is not enjoyed nor by them desired till renewed in the spirit of their minds; but being God's adopted sons, therefore in his account they were entitled to them; and because they were sons, the Spirit of Christ is sent into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father. It is owing to the Spirit of adoption, or the Holy Ghost, bearing witness to their relationship as the children of God, that they are delivered from that bondage and fear which would other-

wise overwhelm them, in consequence of a sight and sense of criminal distance from God, and unlikeness to him. Rom. viii. 15, 17. The bodies of God's people were included in the act of adoption, and with their souls were given to Christ, and bought by him; "Ye are bought with a price, wherefore glorify God in your bodies,—which are his. But though the members of the body are instruments of righteousness unto holiness, in consequence of a person being renewed in the spirit of his mind, yet while in this life the bodies of the saints have no peculiar marks of divine sonship, but are subject to vanity, bondage, and corruption. The privileges of adoption, therefore, as relating to them, will not be enjoyed till the resurrection, for the bodies of all men through sin are the seat of misery; and not only bodies in general, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Rom. viii. 23. Sonship by *adoption* is not *contrary* to, nor does it render relationship to God by *regeneration*, UNNECESSARY; there is as much need of a *meetness* for heaven as of a *title* to it. In order to consummate happiness, it is as necessary to have a *disposition*, or *taste*, for pure and refined pleasure, as it is to be delivered from pain. Therefore, except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, he cannot see it in its nature, beauty, and spiritual glory, for the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Hence (says Christ) ye must be born again. The doctrine of adoption is supporting to the believer's hope, even when he loathes and bemoans himself on the account of transgressions, for the very name Jesus (a Saviour) was given to Immanuel, because he should save *his* people from their sins, Matt. i. 21. But considered as born again, they are not denominated sinners, but saints, for he that is born of God sinneth not. Sin is not his occupation. By adoption God's people were in a point of *relation* made near him, as respecting their persons. By regeneration they become followers of him as dear children, through their being the subjects of gracious principles and holy dispositions.

To conclude; as sonship amongst men arises from adoption and likewise from natural descent or generation; the Lord, therefore, more fully to express his love to his people, and the ground of their claim or title to heavenly things, has been pleased to discover himself as their Father under both considerations; which if properly attended to by the household of faith, their differences would in some measure subside,

and their difficulties in some degree diminish; for according to the scriptural account of relation to God, they are most certainly right who say, that by regeneration or heavenly birth the people of God are denominated sons in a proper sense, and in which sense they were *not* his children *before*, for we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. But those who heartily subscribe to this truth, may surely, without offence, be allowed to say, that by adoption they *were* constituted sons *before* believing; for none are denominated believers till born of God, and it would be absurd to suppose they were not till then adopted. Equally absurd as to suppose Adam adopted Abel, or that it is necessary for his majesty to adopt the prince of Wales. When the scriptures treat *only* of men's relation to God, it is then attributed to adoption; or the gracious act of Jehovah's will towards them; which does not imply, but is distinct from, his powerful influences in and upon them. But when *likeness* and *relation* to God are *jointly* considered, an heavenly birth is then intended or included. For the Holy Spirit's operations in the souls of men are illustrated by natural generation; *because* such are thereby made partakers of the Divine image, as it consisteth in righteousness and true holiness. The consideration of these things, it is hoped, may tend to reconcile the minds of some of the people of God, and prevent their falling out by the way.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *The Doctrine of Atonement.*

THIS important truth is attended with divers difficulties, which are perplexing to weak Christians, the removal of which calls for serious attention to its nature and necessity. *Atonement* signifies reconciliation, or appeasing of anger; to atone is to harmonize or bring parties to an agreement that were at variance, or to remove that distance and disaffection which have subsisted between parties offended, so as to be *at one* again, or brought into a state of friendship, amity, and good will. The atonement under present consideration, is that by, or on the account of, which God is pacified towards, or pardons the sins of his people. Various ideas are included in the term, as used in scripture, but they are all of a kindred nature, and adhere to the important doctrine, as their central point, tending to explain its natural origin and efficacy. In order to obtain a distinct view of the subject, it may be proper to observe,

First: It supposes the party to have been justly injured [or offended] to whom satisfaction is due. This was in fact the case in respect of God. Men, all men, are become enemies to him without any reason which can possibly exculpate them from blame. His law, which men have broken, was in every respect reasonable and right. His authority, though indisputably the highest and best founded, is treated by man with the greatest contempt. The moral beauty and excellency of God is become disgusting to his rebellious creatures. As Jehovah is the first, the best, and most worthy of all beings, it is fit he should value and esteem his own glory in proportion to its worth, which is infinitely more excellent and more dear to him than all creatures in heaven and earth. But man has set up his own honor and happiness in opposition to God's and (as it were) deifies himself, and debases Jehovah, to whom he pays no further regard than he apprehends will terminate in his own advantage. God's anger is righteous displeasure, for men have hated him without a cause; there was nothing in his nature, character, or commands; with which men could be justly displeased. God never did any thing to provoke his creatures to revolt; if he had, he would have been under obligation to have made satisfaction to man for the injury done him, in order to an honorable reconciliation, that man might be just, and the justifier of God, which is shocking to suppose: therefore,

Secondly: The atonement supposes the offending party, *man*, to have been justly deserving punishment, and exposed to misery. If he was not exposed to misery, there could have been no need of the exercise of mercy; and if he was the real offender, something was needful to atone for the offence, in order to a restoration of friendship between him and his Creator. There is a prevalent conviction attending guilt, of the necessity of something to recommend to and pacify offended Deity. It is not against atonement that men are naturally prejudiced; but it is only that of God's providing to which they have an enmity and aversion. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God?" is the common and grand inquiry of a guilty mind. It is not a bowing before him, either in a way of submission, confession, supplication, or obedience, that will satisfy for past offences, but something that has worth and efficacy to atone for the sin of the soul, in order to an acceptable coming to, and bowing before the most high God: therefore, "thousands of rams, ten thousand of rivers of oil," and even "the first-born of the body," is thought of for the purpose of pleasing an offended God. "He hath shown thee,



O man!" (in his word,) "what is good" for the pacification of Divine justice, and what he requires of thee, as a grateful return for the inestimable favor. Mic. vi. 6, 7, 8. Not all created good (was it at the sinner's disposal) could compensate for the injury done to Jehovah's righteous law and equitable government, because it bears no proportion to an infinite evil; therefore, the wisdom of men and angels could never have pointed out a method for the exercise of mercy, consistent with the natural rights of justice and truth. But God, through infinite wisdom and sovereign love, has made a gracious proclamation in favor of criminal man, saying, "Deliver his soul from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom" or an atonement: this was entirely a new procedure, the effect of a new and well-ordered covenant, according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. There was nothing in God's law, nothing in the original constitution of things, nor any known property in Deity, from whence it could be inferred, that mercy would ever be shown to man, or friendship be restored between him and his justly offended Sovereign. The gracious intention was *hid* in God. Eph. iii. 9. Yea, had an intimation been given of the kind design, the nature of atonement is such that created wisdom could never have guessed *how*, or by whom it could be accomplished. For,

1. The person undertaking to atone, must have been able to offer to God that which was infinite in its worth and value.

2. [He must have the *nature* of those whom his atonement is to benefit; i. e. he must] be MAN, capable of obeying the law, and bearing its tremendous curse; [and this] without personal and perpetual destruction.

3. He who atones for another's crimes must himself be innocent, otherwise an atonement would be needful on his own account; and therefore, whatever he might do or endure for the purpose of reconciliation, could not properly be imputed to, or benefit any other guilty person. But among men, where could perfect innocence be found, seeing the whole world is become guilty before God? But supposing such a one could have been found, an atonement would not have appeared possible, because,

4. Equity cannot allow an innocent person to suffer punishment. It is contrary to the natural rule of right; penal suffering cannot be inflicted but in consequence of guilt: therefore he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they are both an abomination to the Lord. Prov. xvii. 15. And shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? It is not possible he should do that which is abhorrent to his na-

ture, and abominable in his sight; therefore, as a God of equity he cannot clear the guilty, nor punish the innocent. 'Again,

5. He who is supposed to endure vicarious punishment, or suffer in the room and stead of another, must stand in such prior relation to or union with him, on whose behalf he is punished, as is necessary to support the delinquent's claim to an equitable discharge. But where could such a friend be found, standing judicially related to miserable man, to act as his surety, or as a day's-man between him and his God, and lay his hand upon them both? Job ix. 33. xvii. 3. But on a supposition such a friend could have been pointed out, who was allowedly one in law with the sinner, yet he could not die, or suffer in his stead, though even desirous of it, because,

6. No creature has power or authority over his own life, to lay it down when he pleases, nor even to suffer mutilation on behalf of his dearest friend; for his life and his limbs are at the sole and only disposal of God, in whom we all live and move, and from whom we have our being.

From the above, and similar considerations, it appears, that the nature of sin, and the condition of men, were such as totally to preclude every ray of hope, yea, every idea of the possibility of an atonement being made, or a reconciliation accomplished. But in the glorious gospel, God has opened a door of hope for lost sinners. He has graciously provided and revealed a method of salvation, which finite wisdom could never have deemed possible, a contrivance wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence. Eph. i. 8. For every difficulty vanishes when the glorious Immanuel is viewed as the atoning priest and bleeding victim. Here is infinite worth, value and virtue, infinite ability to obey the precepts of the law, and endure its awful penalty, without sustaining the loss of final felicity. He was holy, harmless and separate from sinners. But that he might legally suffer, the just for the unjust, he who knew no sin was made sin for us. The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, which he bore in his own body on the tree, when he made his soul an offering for sin. Thus, through imputation, he was numbered with transgressors, and bore the sins of many, which he put away by the sacrifice of himself. What he did and endured in the room and stead of his people, was righteously placed to their account. *He* being graciously substituted in their stead, being their surety, made under the law, that he might redeem them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them. He, therefore, kindly gave his life a ransom for his people, for he had authority and power to lay down his life, and power to take it

up again. This commandment, says he, I received of my Father. His propitiatory death was according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and agreeable to the everlasting covenant, and therefore with his full approbation and free consent; for the counsel of peace was between them both, (which will ever continue,) and his delights were with the sons of men.

Christ's atonement was illustrated by the various atonements under the law, [and was the central point of them.] The respective victims were without blemish; were the property of the persons on whose account they were to be offered; the crimes they were designed to expiate and atone for, were first solemnly confessed over them, and then as having sin placed on or transferred to them, they were offered up as the sinner's substitute, in consequence of which temporary forgiveness was obtained; for these were only shadows of good things to come, and were offered year by year continually, but could never make the comers thereunto perfect, or take away sin as pertaining to the conscience. The law could make nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did: see Heb. x. *Atonement* is a declaration of divine righteousness, and a vindication of Jehovah's justice in condemning and punishing for sin; therefore the act of Phineas, in taking vengeance in behalf of God on daring offenders, is called an atonement for the congregation. Atonement is designed as a covering of the guilty soul; thereby their iniquities are covered, and their transgressions are forgiven. When the congregation was numbered, it was enjoined on every man to give to the Lord a ransom for his soul; the rich were to give more than half a shekel,\* nor the poor less; which was called atonement money, as thereby atonement was made for their souls. In consequence of which price, they were covered from the plague to which they were liable. See Exod. xxx. 12, 16. So Jesus gave himself a ransom for many: his people were bought with a price, not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God, in whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. By the blessed Jesus, the purity of God's law was fully approved and eternally preserved, its righteous claims established and fully confirmed; its tremendous curse was by him endured, and his people exempted from wrath to come. In him mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. He is the true antitype of the mercy-seat, whom God hath set forth to be a

propitiation through faith in his blood. The seat of mercy, where Deity appeared propitious, was the cover of, and supported by the ark, which contained and preserved the holy law which men had violated, denoting that the glory of God's righteous government must be secured before pardoning mercy could be discovered. To deny the glory and equity of God's law, by which sinners are condemned, antecedent to the gospel, is to undermine the foundation of mercy, and destroy the pillars which support the throne of rich, reigning grace. The blood of atonement, sprinkled annually on the mercy-seat by the high priest, was an acknowledgment of Israel's guilt, and Jehovah's just authority; and likewise of their absolute dependence on his voluntary mercy, richly dispensed and gloriously displayed, consistent with his infinite hatred to sin and inflexible regard to impartial justice and punitive equity.

Some represent the atonement of Christ as unnecessary in order to the pardon of sin, the remission of which is, by them, considered as an act of divine clemency, without respect had to any merit attending the sufferings of Christ in the stead of those whose transgressions are forgiven. By this many have been perplexed, seeing such a representation and view of things evidently tends to lessen the odious nature of sin, tarnish the lustre of Jehovah's character, and diminish the believer's obligation to Jesus. We therefore shall consider,

1. It is undeniable that a consciousness of sin is attended with a fear of punishment in those who are not favored with a divine revelation. Hence the apostle, speaking of the heathen world, says, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death." Rom. i. 32. But if punishment be not necessarily connected with transgression, how could the dread of suffering, and a conviction of the righteousness of God in taking vengeance, be so deeply engraven on the hearts of those who did not know the will and determination of God, except as inferred from the natural obligation his creatures are under to glorify him as their Creator? No creature can possibly know what originates in, or is dependent upon, the sovereign will of God, without a divine revelation, but as the punishment of sin can be known where a revelation is not [possessed,] therefore the punishment of sin arises not from divine sovereignty, but from the essential purity, dignity and rectitude of Jehovah's nature: [and hence] there was a necessity for Christ, as the surety, to endure the penalty, in order to his people's enjoying a pardon; for sin is so abominable in God's sight, so contrary to his pure nature, that punishment for

\* A little over twenty-five cents, and so within the compass of the poor.



it cannot be dispensed with; a sinner, as such, cannot be safe. Hence there was a necessity for Jesus the Saviour to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself, to endure the curse, that his people might be exempted from sin's demerit, enjoy heavenly blessings, and wear the celestial crown.

2. Through the sufferings of Christ the essential righteousness of God is discovered, and his equity in acquitting the believer is thereby evidenced, and on that basis eternally established. It is Jesus Christ as a Redeemer, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past," (i. e. the sins of the Old Testament saints,) "through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii. 25, 26. If God could with equity have pardoned sin, and justified criminals by an act of sovereign clemency, without an atonement, the death of Jesus did *not* render the sinner's acquittal just and righteous, which the apostle asserts. But as the equity of God in justifying the ungodly, depends upon the Saviour's sufferings, therefore without his sufferings there could have been no pardon of sin granted; for "all his ways are judgment, a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he." Deut. xxxii. 4. When we say, God could not pardon sin without an atonement, or that "without shedding of blood there is no remission," a limitation of Jehovah's power is not intended, nor is it from thence inferable; for pardon and justification are not productions of Divine power, but are acts of his will. Besides, God cannot do what is improper. He cannot lie, he cannot deny himself; and of iniquity he says, "I cannot away with it;" not owing to a deficiency in power, but the perfection of his purity and rectitude of his nature.

3. God's gift of his Son to die for us, is always, in scripture, admired as the greatest and most astonishing instance of his love to sinners, and considered as a blessing superior to any other conferred on his people. Hence the apostle infers, "if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. But if sinners could have been made happy without Jesus, if there was no real necessity for his death, the gift of Christ, by such an awful supposition, is diminished in its value, and the favor sinks into the number of non-essentials in point of salvation and eternal felicity.

4. If Divine justice could have dispensed with the punishment of sin, Christ was so precious to his righteous Father, and so entirely loved by him, that it is natural to

suppose he would have been spared; those agonizing sorrows and excruciating pains, under which he groaned and died, would not have been, without necessity, inflicted upon the darling of heaven. But as sin was placed to his account, it pleased the Father to bruise him, and put him to grief; though he pleaded to have the cup removed if possible, yet he spared him not. Now as in every other thing the Father heard him always, may we not from thence conclude, it was impossible for the connection between *sin* and *suffering* to be broken? Who can attend to the tremendous language of a sin-avenging God, saying, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow," smite him; or seriously reflect on the doleful groans and bloody sufferings of the Son of God, in the garden, and on the cross; and calmly conclude there was no necessity for any thing of that nature.

5. Those who are redeemed from sin, and reign with God in heavenly pomp and holy splendor, ascribe their deliverance and advancement to the kindness of Christ, and the efficacy of his sufferings; for with triumphant pleasure and gratitude they sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." Rev. i. 5, 6. But how does the propriety of such acknowledgments appear, *if* what Jesus did was not at all necessary to their deliverance from sin and advancement to dignity and delight? From the above considerations it appears, there was a necessity for Jesus to die, the just for the unjust, that he might bring them to God.

Some again admit the death of Christ was necessary, in order to the forgiveness of sins, yet deny him the honor of properly meriting for his people an exemption from punishment, and assert that the efficacy of his sufferings as a sacrifice arose entirely from the will and appointment of God. That he became a mediator, surety, and sacrifice on behalf of his people, in consequence of Divine appointment, is undoubtedly evident; but that his *value* and worth, efficacy and merit, arose from thence, can never be proved. God graciously provided and found the ransom, on which account pardon, justification, and the whole of salvation is all of grace; free exuberant grace, and rich mercy. That a person of such infinite worth and dignity as Immanuel, God's own and only begotten Son, should die for sinners, is an unparalleled instance of favor and love. It is the wonder of angels the terror of devils, and the joy and triumph of saints. But it is absurd to suppose his personal dignity arose from his debasement, that he became strong, because

help was laid upon him, or that his real worth arose from his appointment to ransom miserable captives, and discharge the debt of prodigal transgressors. Christ was appointed, and agreed in covenant to do and suffer what he was under no natural obligation to perform or endure; and from his native dignity, worth, and ability, arose his merit and efficacy. To suppose God appointed his death to be efficacious without real efficacy, or meritorious without personal merit, is a contradiction in terms, an awful reflection on the Divine understanding, and an affront to common sense. Again, if God accepted of the death of Jesus as meritorious, though it was not so in its own nature, then might he have pardoned sins by a simple act of sovereign clemency, without the death of his Son; for it would surely have been equally just to have pardoned sin without a sacrifice, as to remit sin in consequence of that which is, in its nature, destitute of merit and efficacy. Once more, if merit and real efficacy arise only from the Divine appointment, it would have been possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to have taken away sin, or any other animal would have been sufficient for the removal of guilt and saving lost sinners, if God had been pleased to have appointed such an end to have been answered by their death. But the direct contrary to the above is asserted by one who well understood and delighted in the doctrine of reconciliation. His words are: "For it is not impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins;" Heb. x. 4, "which sacrifices can never take away sins;" verse 11. "It was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. But now once in the end of the world hath he (Christ) appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" chap. ix. 23, 26. "He hath made peace by the blood of his cross," Heb. ix. 12; "having obtained eternal redemption for us," "made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness," "with which the Lord is well pleased;" Dan. ix. 24. Isaiah, xlii. 21. Therefore to every believer Jehovah says, "Fury is not in me." Isaiah xxvii. 4.

It is hoped the above remarks may help the entangled Christian over the objections made against the necessity, merit, and efficacy of the Saviour's death, as an atoning sacrifice for sin, and tend to increase his knowledge of, faith in, and love to the blessed Jesus, as able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. I should therefore add no more on the subject, were it not for another stumbling-block lately thrown in the way of believers, equal-

ly, if not more formidable in appearance than the above: Which is, if Christ was a Divine person, he could not atone for sin, because Deity could not die.

This artful objection seems intended to draw the unwary Christian into a dreadful dilemma, either to give up the soul-supporting doctrine of the atonement, or to deny the divinity of the Son of God. The objection is the more dangerous, as it seems to look on the doctrine of atonement with a smiling, approving countenance. But in fact the design of it is to undermine the real personal merit of Christ, and place the efficacy of his blood to the account of God's appointment, as mentioned above. The evident, though disguised intention of the objection and language is plainly this: "Sinners, you must be content with a finite creature Saviour, or none at all. If Christ be God, he is too great to do you any essential service as a Saviour, because Deity cannot die. Therefore do not think sin is infinitely odious and hateful to God. It does not demerit infinite displeasure and punishment. If it did, there could be no infinite satisfaction made to God; for even supposing Christ to be Divine, his sacrifice could not be of infinite value, because as a Divine person he could not die." Let us calmly consider this formidable objection, and seriously attend to the supposed dreadful dilemma, in which will be found more artful sophistry, than argument and solid sense.

Death always implies a separation or a loss of that wherein life consisted. Death, in the sense we are now called to consider it, is a separation of the principle of sensation and influence; thus it is said, "The body without the spirit is dead." Without the soul it is in a state of total inactivity, incapable of voluntary motion, and divested of all sensation. Now though the body only be the subject of death, considered as a state of *inactivity* and *insensibility*, yet the *man* is said to be dead, when soul and body, the constituent parts of humanity, are separated, although the soul or spirit, distinctly considered from the body, is not the subject of death. A spirit cannot die, because it is of a simple or uncompound nature. There is no part of a soul, from whence another part of *itself* can be separated or divided. If a soul can be so separated, consciousness either does, or does not, continue in each separated part. If each part remain conscious, then are they two souls, or two conscious subsistences. If one separated part of the soul remain unconscious, or in a state of insensibility, wherein does that supposed unconscious part differ from matter? A created spirit might cease to exist, if God so determined; but die it cannot. Annihilation is not death.



What is annihilated has no *existence*, but what is dead *exists*, however its form be changed. There is therefore no force in the objection, *Deity cannot die*; for as no *spirit* can die, it might as pertinently be objected, if Christ had a soul he could not atone for sin, because a soul cannot die. But the death of a spirit cannot be supposed; in that case, death is not predicable; yet a man being composed of body and spirit, is with propriety said to be dead, when matter and mind, those constituent parts of humanity, are separated. Dead saints are therefore said to "rest in their beds," in respect of their bodies: yet in reference to their souls, "each one is walking in his uprightness." Death is therefore called a departure. "The time of my departure is at hand." Now as the Divine and human Spirit of our Immanuel ceased to animate his body, the person of the Mediator may as properly be said to have been dead, as the person of Samuel, David, or any other. It may be necessary to observe, that death does not dissolve the *relation* between the body and spirit, but death consists in a total cessation of vital influence, or a removal from the body, for a period, of the principle of *sensation* and *animation*. But the relative union still continuing, therefore the spirits of martyrs are represented as concerned about, and longing for their bodies, which were killed for the cause of Christ on earth, and at the resurrection every soul will have its *own* body. As through the separation of body and soul, and the relation between them being undissolved, the *man* is properly dead, and yet the soul not changed in its natural powers; so, in like manner, and for the same reason, it appears the person of the Mediator was really dead for a time, his precious body not being *animated* by, though related to, his human and Divine spirit. Yet his death does not imply or suppose the least *change* or *mutability* in its Divine nature, nor any alteration in the powers and properties of his soul. Agreeably to the above view of things we are told, that when the beloved disciple saw his Lord in transcendent splendor and majestic glory, and fell at his feet as dead, the reviving and compassionate language of Jesus was, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, he that liveth and was dead, and behold I live for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and death." Rev. i. 17, 18. That he, the first and the last, was dead, is again repeated in the solemn message sent to the church at Smyrna. Rev. ii. 8. Thus it appears that there is no force at all in the objection aforesaid; for instead of Christ's divinity rendering him incapable of atoning for sin, the infinite virtue and value attending the sufferings of his humanity arose from its union with

the Divine nature, as one person. By virtue of which union, his blood is divinely precious, and called the blood of God: like as the spirits under the altar call the blood with which they sealed their testimony for God, when in the body, *our blood*.\* May the Lord the Spirit bless these attempts to remove the stumbling-blocks out of the way of serious inquirers after the truth as it is in Jesus.

## PART II.

### EXPERIMENTAL DIFFICULTIES.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### *A Sinner's Warrant to Apply to Christ.*

STUMBLING-BLOCKS relating to CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE are various; and what generally appears first in view is, respecting what right or warrant an undone sinner hath to apply to Jesus as a Saviour. It is common for those who are convinced of sin, and see the need of salvation, to look for some good thing in them, as the ground of encouragement for their applying to and closing with the blessed Jesus. But finding themselves altogether vile, sinful, and unworthy, they apprehend it would be daring presumption in their present condition to trust in, or apply to him for salvation. The stumbling-block, in this case, seems to arise from a mistaken apprehension, accounting that which supports a person's

\* To elucidate the above subject, and render it plain to young Christians, it may not be amiss to observe the following easy illustrative gradations. There is a value or worth attending simple matter considered as the production of God, who made every thing good, yea, very good; yet animated matter is superior to what is not so, though it were an inferior form; otherwise a living dog would not be better than a dead lion, nor the body of a man preferable to a bag of sand. Animated bodies arise in value and respect, in proportion to the natural superiority of the spirits by which they are governed and influenced; though the body of a sparrow is the subject of animation as much as the body of a man, yet a human body is of *more* value than many sparrows. Again, the importance of actions through the medium of matter arises from the volitions and influence of the spirit by which they are performed; were it not so, the action of a man would not excel those of a monkey. Moreover, in regard to human nature, there is a great disproportion in real worth, arising from internal qualities, or external dignity; for scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man, some would even dare to die. Hence David's adherents said, *Thou art worth ten thousand of us*. How infinitely precious and worthy then was the Divine Jesus, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. May every believer's heart glow with love to him, and gratitude for him, and say, with unfeigned lips, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."

right to come to Christ is synonymous with, or equivalent to, what evidences an interest in him; or, in other words, persons want to know that they are really converted before they dare apply to Jesus. What greatly tends to entangle and retard the progress of such souls, are certain injudicious and dangerous maxims relating to *experimental religion*.

First; Some will say, and many suggest, that it is not the duty of unconverted people to pray. But if so, in order to a conviction of prayer being a duty, the prayerless person, even while continuing so, must have evidence of a conversion to God, which is ridiculously absurd. Though Peter perceived that Simon the sorcerer was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, yet he directed him to penitence and prayer. It is evident there can be no gracious acts, but in consequence of gracious principles; yet it is equally evident, that gracious principles cannot be discerned but by gracious acts; therefore such acts must necessarily precede, or be prior to the discernment of a spiritual principle. It is therefore impossible for any man to know or feel himself to be the subject of grace while he is prayerless, or to have the least evidence of his relation to Christ, without a reliance upon him and delight in him.

To assert, therefore, that persons are not to pray till they are converted, is dangerous and absurd. Dangerous, as it leads into a state of deception, into the very essence of pharisaism; for such as think themselves converted before they come to Christ, by penitential prayer and faith, found their hopes on self-righteousness: the secret language of their deceived hearts is, *God be thanked, I am not now like other men*, stand by, thou unconverted sinner, I am holier than thou. Such do not go to Christ as a trembling criminal, but a confident convert; not as an undone sinner, but a self-admired saint. Again; such a representation is dangerous, as it tends to fatal security, and keeps a carnal mind in profound and fatal peace; for a man lives without prayer, and consequently without God, yet his conscience does not, cannot accuse him with the neglect of duty. If he ought not to pray, an aversion to pray is not a criminal, but a commendable disposition; for surely a person is much to be commended for being averse to what he ought not to do. If it be said, an unregenerate man ought not to pray, because while in such a state they are incapable of spiritual actions, such objectors ought to point out what duties the unconverted can perform acceptably, or allow that they are not bound to the performance of any; and if not under obligation to obedience, they are not chargeable with sin, and consequent-

ly are in a state of safety, not being exposed to punishment; for whoever are not culpable need not fear the Divine displeasure. But God has said he will pour out his fury on all them who call not on his name.

It is shocking to think any poor sinner should be taught to consider himself exempted from an acknowledgment to God for the mercies he enjoys, and likewise from an application to him for present or future favors. Besides, it is absurd to assert, that a person ought not to pray until he feels himself converted, for it is much the same as saying a man ought not to ask for guidance till he knows he is right, nor seek for a cure till he feels himself healed.

Secondly; A second stumbling maxim is, No man can be the subject of genuine repentance till he beholds by faith the Redeemer as dying for his transgressions, or at least have hope that his sins are forgiven him. A poor wounded sinner not being so favored, is thereby taught to consider the way to the Saviour as barred against him; yea to conclude it would be an affront to the Lord, a horrid provocation to God, for him to pray, Take away all iniquity; or so much as to cry, God be merciful to me a sinner: for all such language is only solemn mocking in the lips of the impenitent; and impenitent such must be, who are destitute of real repentance. But is it not strange that a person cannot be sorry for a fault till he hopes he shall not be punished; nor sincerely beg for a favor till he enjoys it? How shall a person while he is in a state of impenitency know, or what is his warrant to conclude, that Christ died for him in particular? There is nothing in scripture to encourage an impenitent sinner to believe or hope he is in a safe condition, but the very reverse is plainly and awfully expressed, "Thou,—after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Rom. ii. 5. "For except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke xiii. 3. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;" but the sense of no scripture is, if God will give us assurance, or hope of a pardon, we will be faithful and just to acknowledge our offences. If there be no true repentance till the soul behold by faith the Redeemer as dying for its sins, then are we presented with a view of an impenitent believer, or one who believes his sins are pardoned, for the commission of which he was never sorry. The scriptures represent the nature of repentance and faith, and the connection between them, as the very reverse of those raw and rash assertions before referred to, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the



times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts iii. 19. Repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ are subjects so important and comprehensive, as to include the substance of the great apostle's ministry: the necessity of repentance in order to the hope of pardon through faith in the blood of Jesus, he constantly inculcated and testified both to the Jews and Greeks. Acts xx. 21.

Christ is exalted to give first repentance; and *then* remission of sins to Israel. Acts v. 31. Pardon of sin is never, in all the scripture, declared as belonging to the impenitent, but its uniform language is agreeable to the solemn assertion of the Son of God; "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke xiii. 3, 5. Therefore the belief of a pardon is not prior to repentance indeed implies knowledge of, and belief in the righteous and holy nature of God and his law, and a persuasion of personal criminality, as represented in the word of God. It consists in a pungent sense of the evil of sin; a loathing and hearty forsaking of it, and humiliation for it: joined with a justification of the righteousness of God in passing sentence on the guilty criminal. Repentance therefore implies, and is accompanied with the primary actings of faith, and is the immediate effect of grace in the soul; but the first actings of faith are not a believing the person is pardoned, nor even a reliance on Christ for the remission of sin. Nothing can be more false than that an impenitent person has a revealed right to pardon; if he ought to believe he is pardoned before he repents, then he ought to believe a lie. But the most firm, hearty, and constant belief of a falsehood will never make it a truth. To suppose a person to believe in Christ as a dying Saviour, without repentance, is the same as supposing a man to need a physician, and long for a cure, while he is whole. But that such need not a physician, but they that are sick; see Matt. ix. 12. It is impossible such a faith can be right, which springs from an impenitent heart, and which consists in believing that to be a fact, of the truth of which there is no evidence. If such a faith be not genuine, how can a false faith produce true repentance? Repentance is proved to be of a genuine spiritual nature, by its continuance and increase, when the fault repented of is remitted. But the conviction of blame does not spring from a forgiveness of the crime. Legal repentance, or the terrific operation of the law on the conscience without the grace of the gospel, arises from the sense of danger, and is continued and increased only by the fear of punishment; therefore when danger disappears, and self is supposed to be safe, such a repentance

immediately dies, the idea of danger being its sole support. But true repentance, arising from a change of heart, a new and holy principle, and consisting in an aversion to sin, considered in its *power* and *pollution*, as well as its *punishment*, therefore a sense of pardon (though it does not give existence or being to repentance) greatly increases a godly sorrow for sin, the evil of which is more deeply impressed on the mind from a view of the Saviour's sufferings, and the infinitely amiable character of God as a righteous lawgiver and loving Father. Such a view melts the soul into evangelical sorrow for sin, and inflames the mind with indignation against it, and a vehement desire after its total destruction; called by the apostle *revenge*. 2 Cor. vii. 11. When God pours on his chosen the spirit of grace, he first convinceth the soul of sin, and is then to his people a Spirit of supplication; and such suppliants, saith the Lord, shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son. Zech. xii. 10. The language of the true penitent, under the enjoyment of a full pardon, is beautifully set forth in the following lines:

Whilst, with a melting, broken heart,  
My murdered Lord I view,  
I'll raise revenge against my sins,  
And slay the murderers too.— *Watts*.

Again, thirdly: It is frequently asserted, that a true faith in Christ is inseparably connected with the knowledge in him, or that there can be no proper believing in Jesus without considering him as a person's own: this has proved a stumbling-block to many: for as common sense suggests the absolute necessity of *evidence*, in order to support a *claim*, and the soul *before* it goes to Christ not having that evidence, therefore is discouraged from applying to him, till *proof* of an interest in him appear. Laboring in vain for marks and signs, as evidences of their belonging to Christ, in order to warrant or encourage their application to him, they conclude there is no hope, they are none of his chosen and redeemed, &c. But there is no doctrine contained in the gospel, nor even any threatening in the law of God, which is in its own nature, a bar to an undone sinner's coming to Christ for salvation. Their right to come to Christ, does not in the least depend upon, or arise from, *prior* knowledge of *interest* in special blessings, or *feeling* themselves the subjects of supernatural principles. Such knowledge, such experience, is impossible to be obtained, but in consequence of believing in or receiving Jesus the Saviour; for he who believeth not, is declared to be under condemnation; the wrath of God abideth on him. To attempt, therefore, to define, as some do, who

ought, and ought not to return to God by Christ, is daring presumption, and tends to discourage the soul, and rivet the fetters of guilt, where a sense of meanness and misery prevails, and in others, to encourage self-righteousness, by establishing the idea of previous fitness in order to salvation.

If any one should ask, Have I a right to apply to Jesus the Saviour, simply as a poor, undone, perishing sinner, in whom there appears no good thing? I answer, Yes; the gospel proclamation is, "Whosoever will, let him come." "To you O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." Prov. viii. 4. The way to Jesus is graciously laid open for every one who chooses to come to him. His arms of mercy are expanded to receive the coming soul. Fear not, poor sinner, to approach him he will not, on any account, cast thee out. John vi. 37. He does not receive with reluctance; no, it is his joy, it is his delight to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Consider, the painful work of salvation is now, with him, for ever over. His endearing *invitations* to poor heavy-laden sinners, his melting *expostulations* with them, and gracious *reception* of them, are left on record as the warrant, and for the encouragement of sinners; therefore, the worst of such, even the vilest of the vile, may come and apply to him for salvation from sin and sorrow. However remote you are, however great the distance from him, he kindly invites you to view him as the almighty Saviour; saying, "Behold me; Behold me!" Isaiah, lxxv. 1. "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved, for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah, xlv. 22. The gracious grant is indefinite; the way to Jesus is open and free for *whosoever will*, without exception; nothing that God has done, said, is in its nature an obstacle. None can in truth say they desire salvation, but may not apply for it, or cannot attain it. To infer that personal unworthiness, or any scriptural doctrine, is a bar in their way to Jesus, is either the effect of strong temptations, or owing to the want of attention to the grace of God displayed in the gospel. There is no preventive bar in the sinner's way to the Saviour, but what arises from a carnal heart; such as impenitency for sin, an attachment to self-righteousness, and an avowed aversion to the holy perfections of God and his sovereign methods of grace. But let it be observed, that a *grant to come* to Christ does not support a *claim*, or give a right to conclude they shall be saved by him. No, such a conclusion is only inferable from our having really believed in his name; a right to go to Christ is no proof we have done so. What *evidences* a person's being a true believer is quite distinct from what *warrants* his apply-

ing to the Saviour: the latter arises from what God in his word *says* to him; the former appears from the change which is *wrought* in him. To put persons, therefore, examining themselves whether they have faith, before they believe, is extremely injudicious; and to encourage professors in the persuasion they are believers, without scripture evidence of an internal change, is awfully dangerous.

It would be a great advantage to inquiring souls, and discouraged Christians, as well as presumptuous professors, to have right ideas of the nature of faith, or what it is to believe to the saving of the soul. Faith is a believing the Divine testimony. For he that believeth not maketh God a liar. Faith in Christ is a crediting what the scriptures assert concerning him; which may be comprised in the following three things: *That* he is, *what* he is, and *whose* he is. The first is absolutely necessary; for saith Jesus, "Except ye believe that I am he," viz. the real and true Messiah, the promised Saviour, "ye shall die in your sins." But it is not enough to believe this, which wicked men may do; Simon the sorcerer did, and devils believe it and tremble. These evil spirits knew him to be Christ the Son of the living God. Luke iv. 41. But true faith, with which salvation is connected, consists in believing likewise, *what he is*. Truths, respecting his person, offices, works, and relations, may be assented to, by such as hath no faith in his excellency, but have an enmity against *what he is*. But to them that believe Christ is precious; he is declared to be the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. The gracious soul, heartily believes him to be so, and therefore can sincerely adopt the language as his own. His personal qualities, with the nature and design of his work and offices, the real Christian believes. He gives credit to the Divine testimony, not only in respect of its *reality*, but likewise its holy *nature* and spiritual *tendency*. The tidings concerning the person of Christ, and his infinite fulness of merit and grace, are declared to be good, as well as true; the renewed soul believes them to be so, even the only satisfying portion that an immortal mind can possess. He receives them as every way *sued* to his present circumstances, as *guilty* and *impure*; being divinely adapted to render him *holy* and *happy* for ever. This is what the scripture calls an *embracing*, when true faith is the subject under immediate consideration. See Heb. xi. 13.

Saving faith is differently denominated in scripture, but always exactly corresponding with the various representations of Christ in the gospel. Is he lifted up as an object to be beheld? Believers "look to him" as the wounded Jews did to the braz-



en serpent lifted up in the wilderness for their relief. Is he a "gift?" Faith as such "receives" him. As he is called the "bread of life," believing is termed an "eating or living upon" him. Considering him as a *support*, faith is described as a leaning upon him. He is called a faithful friend; and faith is then denominated a "confiding or trusting," in him. He is set forth as a "refuge," and faith is then termed a "running or flying" to him for *safety*. He is represented as the *husband* of his people, and then their faith is called *giving themselves to him*. Many more instances might be produced of the diversification of believing in Christ, according as its object is represented; for the purpose of setting forth the various infinite blessings in him, and benefits flowing from him, who is the real believers' *all in all*. But I hope the above few instances may suffice to illustrate the true Christian's belief in Jesus respecting *what he is*; with which faith salvation is inseparably connected in the scriptures of truth. As to faith in the third sense i. e. *Whose he is*: Faith, or believing in the last sense, if right, must be founded on the Divine word as well as the former; for that must sink which has not "Thus saith the Lord" for its *support*. If faith be a believing the Divine testimony, then the grand inquiry ought be, who the scriptures declare to be interested in Christ? To enforce the solemn inquiry, and lead to solid satisfaction in a matter so infinitely important, we may observe two things, which I suppose will readily be granted by every person of common understanding.

1. All men are not savingly interested in Christ, for some are declared to be none of his.

2. No man is described as belonging to Christ by his personal name, situation in life, external profession, natural connections, or descent; therefore it follows, that some other description of the persons must be sought for, distinct from the above, on which the belief for a saving interest in Christ may be founded.

Who then have a right, according to scripture, to conclude Christ is theirs, and they are his? Some there are whose common reply to the important query is, *Christ belongs to those who believe themselves savingly interested in him*. But the query returns, On what is such a faith or belief founded? If their right to Christ arise from believing him to be theirs, they had no title to him before they so believed; therefore the thing was *false* when they first believed it *true*; and it is very extraordinary indeed that a *falsehood* should become a *truth*, by its being *confidently believed*, or *industriously* propagated. Faith makes no *alteration* in the *nature* of the thing believed. What is *true* does not be-

come *false* because it is discredited. Nor is it possible a lie should change its *nature*, and become *true*, however a person may strive to keep up a *firm* persuasion of its being a *truth*, and labor against *doubting* its reality. It might be happy for such professors, whose faith is founded on *falsehood*, if they could be made ashamed of their assurance, by a deep conviction of their being under a strong delusion, that they believe a lie, and rejoice in a thing of nought. (See 2 Thess. ii. 11. Amos vi. 13.) In this condition, those most certainly are, who believe Christ is theirs without any scriptural evidence to support persuasion. But alas! the bands of such are generally made strong by the joy that accompanies their confidence; for, taking it for granted their faith is right, they apply to themselves the promises of salvation, and think it would be a sin to doubt of their safety, and a much greater to cast away their confidence, which they apprehend will meet with a great recompense of reward. Such despise all evidences of a change of heart, and of the disposition of the soul, as legal and low: their maxim is, *The weaker the evidence the stronger the faith*. Some of the class referred to have defined faith to consist in a believing that *Christ died for my sins in particular*. Such a definition, to be sure, is consistent enough with the sentiment of universal redemption. For all who believe that doctrine must have such a faith, unless they should happen to doubt their being of the human species. But *that* faith does not ensure the salvation of any man, unless all men be saved. Nay, if the sentiment aforesaid be granted, the salvation of no man can be inferred from an interest in the Saviour's death, because each of those in hell (if it be allowed any of the human race are there) may with as much truth as those in heaven, say, *Jesus loved me, and gave himself for me*. Such a faith is therefore destitute of evidence of a saving interest in Christ.

Others have asserted that faith is a believing *Christ to be a person's own, without any evidence from scriptures, sense or reason*. Be not discouraged, ye seeking souls, with the boasted attainments of such believers as aforesaid, who glory in their freedom from doubts about their soul's salvation. You have a more sure word of prophecy, to which ye do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place. God has, in his word, given a full description of all those who are interested in Christ, and are, as such, heirs of his salvation; those who answer the description have a right to conclude, that *through the grace of the Lord Jesus they shall be saved*. Those who have not the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, (however they may make their boast of

God, as the carnal Jews did,) they are none of his. Rom. viii. 9; and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Gal. v. 24; they give full consent to the death of sin, and heartily cry respecting all their iniquities, Away with them, crucify them. They wish every sin to be the object of universal contempt, and would gladly put them to open shame. They account them the worst enemies to God and their souls; and such is their enmity against those grand deceivers, that nothing can satisfy them short of their total destruction. The Spirit of God in the word, in describing the character of real saints, *beareth witness with our spirits*, which are conscious of a real change, *that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus*. Rom. viii. 16, 17. Therefore, he that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. That is, he is conscious of the acts of his own soul, that they are in *nature* and *kind*, however they are deficient in *degree*, what the people of God in the scriptures are *described* by.

Every Christian, therefore, habitually believes that such persons as answer to the *description* of saints, whether *themselves* or *others*, shall have everlasting life, (and that no other but such shall be saved.) He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son; and this is the record, that God hath given to *us* eternal life; and this life is in his Son; 1 John, v. 10, 11. There is a cordial believing in Christ respecting both, *that he is*, and *what he is*, and likewise respecting *whose he is*; in reference to the true character of those interested in him, before the believer may be fully satisfied respecting his own personal claim to Christ. The apostle Paul, writing to the saints at Ephesus, and speaking of himself and others who first trusted in Christ, adds, *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. In whom also AFTER that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise*. Eph. i. 13. A seal is a visible impression made for the purpose of confirmation; the saints were not confirmed in their personal interest in the promises, till after they trusted, or believed in Christ. Another apostle, in a letter to the people of God in general, says, these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life; and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. 1 John, v. 13. He had in the letter laid down several marks, by which the saints are distinguished from others, such as *obedience* to God, *hatred* to sin, and *love* to the brethren, and

*hereby* (says he) we *know* that we know him. Chap. ii. 3. The weak among them, which he called little children, he was confident, from the appearance of real holiness, that they were in a happy and safe condition, having their sins forgiven for Christ's sake. Yet these were not fully confirmed, though they had believed to the saving of the soul; therefore, what he had wrote for their serious consideration, was in order that they might be *assured* of eternal life, being *included* among those of whom he speaks in the preceding verse, *That have the Son*. He supposes some professors might *believe without evidence*, and boldly say, *We have fellowship with God*. Chap. i. 6. Says another, *I know him*, chap. ii. 4, and *abide in him*, verse 6. *I love God*. Chap. iv. 20. Yea, he supposes some professors might *boast* of having attained to *sinless* perfection, chap. i. 8. But without any ceremony he pronounceth all those who claim a title to salvation, without evidence of sanctification, to be self-deceived, and strangers to God and truth. Chap. i. 6, ii. 10, iv. 20. He calls them to the bar of conscience, and asserts that those, and those only, whose hearts do not condemn them, have confidence towards God. Chap. iii. 19, 21. Every true Christian is possessed of what Jesus terms an *honest heart*. Luke viii. 15. They would not, they dare not claim, or take possession of what is not their own; they are persuaded those who do, will be rejected at last, and made ashamed of their hope and presumptuous persuasion. A God of truth can never require any man to believe a falsehood; nor even any thing relating to a fact which is unrevealed. For instance, he requires men to believe there are three that bear record in heaven, and that these three are one, and the union of two natures in the person of Christ. But *how* these are one, being not revealed, is neither the *object* of faith, nor the *subject* of human understanding. The support of faith is the authority and fidelity of God. Hence the scriptures are called *the faithful word*. Tit. i. 9; *the true saying of God*. Rev. xix. 9. *And this is a faithful saying*, (to be depended upon as an established fact,) *and worthy of all acceptance*, (being fully proved to be infinitely good as well as true,) *that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*. 1 Tim. i. 15. Faith therefore includes not only an *assent* to gospel truths, but a persuasion of their infinite *worth* and transcendent *glory*; and personal interest therein ariseth from the *evidence* of having *received the truth in the love of it*; for faith, objectively considered, or as it respects the things believed by the Christian, is a compendium, or the substance of things hoped for, as published in the glorious gospel of the grace of God.



Faith, subjectively considered, consisteth in the evidence of things not seen by the carnal mind, or corporeal eye. Heb. xi. 1: which hidden realities, though concealed from the wise and prudent, are revealed unto babes. Matt. xi. 25; and every one who really receives Christ Jesus the Lord, to them he gives power, or authority, to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. However weak their faith may be, they are possessed of that which is in its own nature an evidence that they are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John, i. 12, 13. But though every heaven-born soul is the subject of what evidences a relation to God, he has not always light enough to discern it. Besides, a view of the depravity of his heart engages his attention, and frequently fills him with fear that he is not passed from death unto life. Such persons are referred to the following chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

### *Concerning the New Birth.*

SOME gracious people are greatly discouraged because they cannot ascertain the time when they passed under such a change. They are persuaded of the truth, and are convinced of the propriety of the Lord's solemn asseveration, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But not knowing the time when they were born again, and perhaps, through confused ideas of what is intended by the term, they are kept in a state of uncomfortable suspense, and their progress of vital religion is retarded, not knowing how to determine, or by what rule to judge, whether they are, or are not, born again. To such persons I would propose the following consideration:

Do you know the exact time of your natural birth? None can answer they do from their own knowledge and memory; and though some cannot obtain certain information from any one on what day, or even in what year they were born, yet they do not doubt of the fact. As effects in natural things lead back to their respective causes, and are infallible proofs of their reality, so it is in spiritual affairs. In this manner we are taught in scripture to proceed, in order to gain assurance respecting facts which fall not under immediate personal observation. As, saith the apostle, every house is builded by some man; as therefore every structure, from the princely palace to the meanest cottage, are incon-

testible proofs of human agency, so as saints are God's workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus, and habitations of God through the Spirit, the nature of the change produced in them claims Jehovah for its author; therefore, as the apostle adds, he that buildeth all things is God. Heb. iii. 4. The great inquiry should be, Whether we are the subjects of the heavenly birth or not? for as to the time when, it is an immaterial circumstance, any further than as related to the question, *How old art thou?* As it is not necessary to know the time of your natural birth, in order to prove your proper humanity, neither is the knowledge of your spiritual birth, as to the time when, at all needful to evidence your true Christianity; the change may be demonstrably evident, though the time when it first commenced be uncertain. To know whether a person is born again, it should be considered that the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, whereby sinners are denominated new creatures, is set forth by figurative language. As there are new principles or dispositions produced, it is called a creation. "Created in Christ Jesus." Eph. ii. 10. As it bears resemblance to procreation, it is therefore called a regeneration and a new birth. These terms are used for the purpose of illustrating its nature, the evident and plain import of which are to point out, that a person who is the subject of such a gracious charge, feels and views himself to be in such circumstances, in a spiritual sense, as resemble the natural condition of an infant; for such persons feel themselves feeble and forlorn; they are convinced of their utter inability to provide for the least of their numerous wants, or even to describe them: like a new-born babe they desire the sincere milk of the word, which they relish, taste the sweetness of, and are nourished by. They are dependent entirely on the Lord's care and kindness, who loves them, deals tenderly with them, feeds them with what is convenient for them, as they are able to bear it, clothes them with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation. He teaches them, gradually, the things relating to the kingdom of grace into which they are brought, and of which they are naturally ignorant; for "they shall all be taught of God, from the least of them to the greatest of them." Isa. liv. 13. As they have a disposition for spiritual activity, so the Lord increases their strength, takes them by the hand, teaches them to go. Hos. xi. 3. As they grow in acquaintance with their heavenly Father, and the household of faith, they feel a love to God, a fear of him, have their dependence upon him, and are desirous of his presence, protection, and guidance. They love all the people of God, and those

the best who, as they think, most resemble him. Those, therefore, who are thus dependent upon God, humble before him, having a relish for Divine things, or, in a word, dispositions towards God of a filial nature, becoming a child to his father and family; such have the evidences of being born again, they having been brought with godly simplicity to receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, without which, the Redeemer has declared, no man can in any wise enter therein. Luke, xviii. 17. Thus the feeble state and forlorn condition of the Jews, when God first entered into covenant with them as a people, and they became his special property and care, is illustrated by an infant, Ezek. xvi. in the most deplorable condition. So the spiritual experiences of his people, both sorrowful and sweet, are represented by the metaphor of a helpless infant, under the kind care of its loving, compassionate, and prudent parent. Again, such bear the likeness of their Father God; as by their first birth they partake of the image of the earthly, so by their second birth they are made partakers of the heavenly; for that which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. John, iii. 6. They that are born again, love what God does, and hate what he abhors, which gradually increaseth as they grow in grace, or to maturity, as perfect men in Christ Jesus. A holy disposition therefore an infallible proof of a heavenly descent, or that such are born again.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *Concerning Spiritual Joys.*

MANY Christians are discouraged on account of their not having been favored with such strong consolation as others speak of; and some are stumbled because of the short duration of their joy; and in both the above causes perplexities arise about the real difference between false and true pleasure attending religion. Such persons would do well to consider, that it is not the *height* of consolation, nor the *length* of its continuance, which proves it genuine, or of a true spiritual nature: some of the Galatian church, of whose gracious state the apostle was in doubt, spoke of great blessedness. Gal. iv. 15. The Israelites sang God's praise with great delight at the Red Sea, but soon forgot his works, and rebelled against his authority; the stony ground hearers received the word with joy, but not having depth of root, therefore, when tribulation came for the word's sake, their pleasure and profession died. Even Herod heard John with gladness, yet clave to his

sins: and Ezekiel was a pleasant song to many of his hearers who took no delight in obedience to God. It is possible some may hold fast their self-deception, and go down to hell with a lie in their right hand, rejoicing in a thing of nought; for a hope of deliverance from punishment cannot fail giving pleasure to its possessors; and while the pleasing expectation is supported, the degree of consolation arising from a false hope may be equal, yea, superior to what is produced by a good one. Such not knowing their own hearts, and the infinite evil of sin, are therefore not plagued like other men. Psal. lxxiii. 5, 14. We ought seriously to consider from what our comforts spring, and in what they terminate, in order to know and judge of their true nature and kind: false comforts frequently arise from a partial view of God's salvation. An unsanctified soul will rejoice in the hope of a deliverance from the punishment of sin, simply from the principle of self-love. But mere safety does not satisfy the truly gracious; all such likewise want to have the power of sin subdued, and the pollution of sin removed; their habitual prayer to God is, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." Hosea, xiv. 1, 2. Pleasures therefore arising from a prospect of freedom from sorrow, may be where sin maintains a full dominion; "I shall have peace, (saith one,) though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst; thus he blesteth himself in his heart, when he heareth Jehovah's tremendous curse." How awful is Heaven's language to such a daring deluded sinner! "The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses written in this book shall lie upon him." Deut. xxix. 19, 20.

Again; false joy sometimes ariseth from the manner of relief being brought to the mind, but true pleasure springs from the matter applied, or the nature and suitability of truth discovered. The suddenness of relief is only a circumstance in itself, and yet some seem to build their hope of salvation upon it; but those who infer such impressions are all of God, and absolutely safe, forget that Satanical influences are compared to darts: on the other hand, some unmercifully censure every extraordinary relief as diabolical. But as times of dreadful temptations and overwhelming sorrows are periods which will not admit of delay; and when viewed in that light, it is no wonder the soul with holy vehemence should cry, "Make haste, make no tarrying, oh my God;" and, is it a wonder that God should hear prayer, or be found a present, yea, a very present help in time of trouble? If not, why then should such appearances be



opposed or doubted? The Lord flies on the wings of the wind for the help of Jeshurun, and may he not avenge his own elect, who cry unto him day and night, and that speedily, though he may seem to bear long with them; for as he sendeth forth his commandment upon earth, his word runneth very swiftly? Yea, he says, "Before they call, I will answer; and whilst they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah, lxxv. 24. Daniel found his promise verified in his experience; for while he was speaking in prayer, Gabriel being caused to fly swiftly, touched him, and told him, that the beginning of his supplication, the commandment came forth, in obedience to which he appeared in his favor. Dan. ix. 21, 23.

Those, therefore, are not to be censured or discouraged, who have found that ere they were aware their souls were made like the chariots of Aminadab; providing their hope leads to holiness, and their peace and pleasure terminate in purity. Many Christians have reason to admire the speedy manner in which the Lord has relieved them, when their prospects were dismal, and their souls with horror stood trembling on the brink of eternal woe; like a poor criminal at the fatal tree, expecting every moment to launch into eternity, but who is happily prevented by the sudden arrival of a reprieve or a pardon from his gracious sovereign. He admires and is thankful for the speed with which the joyful message came. Notwithstanding which, he does not consider the manner of the messenger's arrival; but the tidings brought are the principal spring of his joy, and the only foundation of his present security. The posts which carried the cruel edict from the Persian court, to destroy the Jews in every province were hasted by the king's commandment, as well as those despatched in their favor; therefore the monarch's intention was not from thence discoverable. The speed with which a message is carried does not prove it to be of a favorable nature, nor does it so much as demonstrate from or to whom it is sent. Neither does the manner in which any portion of scripture is brought to the mind, determine its being the language of God to that person in particular; the mere mode of impressions is not essential to spiritual comfort, conviction, or instruction; yet many are encouraged or cast down more from the manner in which impressions are made on their minds, than from the matter expressed, or the nature and tendency of truth contained in the scriptures. A genuine hope in God, or the enjoyment of pardon, is ever accompanied with self-diffidence; such as are so favored, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh. Sacred pleasure is not only incomparably superior, but of a nature op-

posite to levity and carnal security; fervent love to God will be excited and promoted by it. I will, says David, love the Lord, because he hath heard my supplication; and of Mary it is said, she loved much because much was forgiven her. It invigorates repentance; "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn," yea, "shall be ashamed and confounded when I am pacified towards them, for all that they have done, saith the Lord." It promotes humble, cheerful, and universal obedience; the language of such a soul is, "What am I? or what was my father's house, that thou shouldest bring me hitherto? How is it, Lord, thou shouldest thus manifest thyself! What shall I render unto the Lord? I will run the ways of thy commandments. Bless the Lord, O my soul."

In regard to those who are distressed about the fluctuation of their enjoyments, it may be a relief to their minds to consider that God "went up from Jacob in the place where he talked with him." Gen. xxxv. 13. David's mountain stood strong, but when the Lord hid his face, he was troubled. Permanent joy is not to be expected in this world, but is reserved for the next. What God imparts now, is designed to encourage and forward the Christian in his duty, and so to profit rather than to please. Again; the shorter our present comforts are, the oftener should we apply to the God of all consolation for the renewal of them; saying with David, "Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation;" and with the pensive prophet, "O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry for a night?" Jer. xiv. 8. And the more watchful should we be lest we grieve the Holy Spirit, the comforter, and cause him to withdraw his soul-cheering influences.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### *Experience of Indwelling Sin.*

A DEEP sense of internal depravity, or the prevalency of sin in the heart, has often been very stumbling to serious Christians, who, on a view of their vileness, have been ready to conclude their cases are both singular and sad; says the discouraged soul, "If I be a Christian, why am I thus?"

It may be an advantage for such to reflect, that a soul-humbling sense of sin, and deep abasement before God, has been experienced by the most eminent saints recorded in scripture, as is evident from the language they have used on the subject of self-description, saying, "Behold I am vile, I abhor

myself." "I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips." "I blush to look up to heaven." "I am as a beast before thee." "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man." "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. I am carnal, and sold under sin. I find a law in my members warring against that in my mind, leading me into captivity." "Iniquities prevail against me." "Evil is present with me. I cannot do the things that I would. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" "We are all as an unclean thing." These, with many more instances which might be produced, demonstrate, that true believers, and they only, are properly acquainted with the plague of their own hearts. Why then should the Christian be discouraged through feeling himself to be, what those, who were eminent for godliness, have with shame and sorrow acknowledged they were? Besides, have you not repeatedly entreated the Lord to search and try you, to discover what was in your hearts? And shall you now be stumbled and discouraged because he has heard and answered your prayers? And as God has given you an experience similar to what was once the case of those who are now the subjects of spotless purity and perpetual praise, is it reasonable to conclude from thence you are not the subjects of a gracious change? You may rather infer, that if the Lord had been pleased to have slain you, he would not have shown you such things as these. Remember the whole need not a physician, but those that are sick; and grace has made rich provision for healing all the diseases and maladies of the mind. Perhaps every good man will at least account himself of all others the most indebted to God and grace: for he feels that in himself which he does not certainly know is in any other, for every heart only knows its own bitterness. By such experiences, the Lord is training his people for the future glory. For, accounting themselves, as St. Paul did, the chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15, their own salvation will be the matter of eternal wonder, every one viewing his own deliverance as the effect of a peculiar exertion of Divine power, and an uncommon display of rich superabounding grace. Being each under infinite deficiency, respecting their personal endeavors to extol the great Jehovah, mutual assistance will be entreated in the work of praise; for the language of the redeemed of the Lord to fellow saints frequently is, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together," Ps. xxxiv. 3. Go on, then, ye blessed of the Lord, pressing after the full possession of that salvation which you see the absolute need of, even a complete deliverance from sin, as well as from sorrow;

that grace which has rendered sin loathsome, and Christ lovely in your view, is sufficient for you. In a perpetual dependence on which, may you hold on your way with courage and caution, till you arrive at Zion's celestial gate! Then shall you obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Isa. xxxv. 10.

## CHAPTER V.

### *Erroneous Views of Christian Doctrines.*

ANOTHER class of Christians present themselves to view, whose progress is retarded by a false and discouraging representation of the distinguishing doctrines of grace; which are frequently asserted to be inimical to experimental religion, and of such a nature as to supersede personal holiness, and render internal conformity to God unnecessary. Whatever God has revealed in his Word, we may be sure is worthy of himself, and advantageous to his people. We ought diligently to inquire what Jehovah has revealed as matter of faith and obedience; and whatever is of a divine original demands our reverent attention, cordial reception, and cheerful obedience. It is the height of arrogance in a puny mortal to dispute with his Maker about the propriety of what he does or says. "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Rom. ix. 20. However, for the relief of such serious minds as are perplexed and stumbled in consequence of the aforesaid objections, let us briefly consider those doctrines which are generally supposed the most exceptionable in relation to Christian experience.

First, the doctrine of imputation. This is not liable to the aforesaid objection; for the placing of the Redeemer's righteousness to the account of his people does not supersede the work of the Spirit of God in the soul, nor render unnecessary holiness of heart, or the exercise of spiritual graces. Imputation is not a transfusion. It makes no alteration in the internal disposition. If it did, our sins being imputed to Christ would have tainted his holy mind. But though sin was placed to his account, and the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all: though He was made sin for us, that he might legally suffer in our stead according to law; yet he was still the Holy One, who knew no sin as a principle in him. So Christ's righteousness "is upon and towards those who believe," Rom. iii. 22; by which they are freed from condemnation, but are not thereby made inwardly pure; the righteousness of Christ is not infused as a holy principle in them, but put upon them as a





set you apart for himself, and preserved you in Christ Jesus, and by his Spirit called you with an high calling, and is now fitting you for, and leading you to, the full enjoyment of salvation with eternal glory. 1 Tim. ii. 10. "Put on, therefore, (as the elect of God, holy and beloved,) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering," which you are under the strongest obligations to discover to your fellow-Christians and fellow-creatures. Ever remember that those who "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, should show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Pet. ii. 9.

This doctrine is not discouraging in its own nature, (however it may be represented,) to any sincere seeking sinner. Such are not called to produce evidences of their election, in order to warrant their application to Jesus for salvation. No, my dear friends, your present concern is now to have guilt and pollution removed, that you may stand accepted before Jehovah's bar. To you there is a fountain opened, the blood of Jesus, which cleanseth from all sin. Your desire of coming to Christ, under a sense of the absolute need you are in of a Saviour, is a hopeful sign that you shall know, if you follow on to know the Lord. None but the chosen of God do ever heartily choose religion as the one thing needful; and the language of the compassionate Saviour is, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out" John, vi. 37. Therefore such as long and wait for the salvation of God, through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, whose hearts' desire, is to be found in Christ, and without blame before him in love, will never meet with a disappointment; for he who cannot lie hath said, "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. Psalm cii. 17. He satisfieth the longing soul, even such as (for the present,) sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron. Psalm cvii. 9, 10. Cordially to embrace Christ, and deliberately to take up his cross and follow him, are the genuine effects of electing love. To every such soul the language of the Lord is, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jer. xxxi. 3. "I will rest in my love, I will rejoice over thee with singing." Zeph. iii. 17. You who love the Lord, and desire to be entirely and eternally devoted to him, you know and are sure you were not naturally so disposed; and if so, that new covenant promise made to Immanuel has been fulfilled in your favor, "Thy people

shall be willing in the day of thy power." Psalm cx. 3. He sent his word unto Jacob, and it lighted upon Israel. You happy souls, who are conscious of having chosen and elected the Lord as your God, need not perplex yourself about his choice of you as his people. But know that the Lord has set apart him that is godly for himself; Psalm iv. 3. Therefore, blessed is the man whom the Lord hath chosen, and caused to approach unto him: Psalm lxxv. 4. For the foundation of God standeth sure, having his seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. 2 Tim. ii. 19. This doctrine is a source of strong consolation to them who have fled for refuge to Christ, the hope set before them. Heb. vi. 17, 18. For in the midst of all the perplexing difficulties and trying occurrences in this fluctuating world, such may triumph in the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised them in Christ Jesus before the world began. Tit. i. 2. For yet a little while, and he that hath said he shall come, will come and will not tarry; then shall they meet with a hearty welcome into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

Fourthly; If discouragements be removed respecting the doctrine of election, it is not probable that redemption will be viewed in a light unfavorable to weak Christians. Every truth relating to the law of God or the gospel of grace, if properly stated, will be disgusting to the carnal and unsanctified mind. But those who are Christians indeed, though they may be ignorant of or even prejudiced against, the terms by which truths are distinguished, yet the nature of truth is not with them an object of aversion; as personal election is not prejudicial to such, it cannot be thought redemption should be so.

For the election and redemption of men are inseparably connected in scripture as distinct links in the grand chain of gospel truth; the personal objects and end are the same in each, and Christ's claim to his people is founded on both; "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine." John xvii. 6, 9, 10. As they were given to him so they were purchased by him; they were committed to his care as sheep to a shepherd, and he laid down his life for them. John, x. 15. "The flock of God he purchased with his own blood." Acts, xx. 28. Called "the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Pet. i. 18. They were given him out of the world. John, xvii. 6. And he redeemed them from among men. Rev. xiv. 4. Out of every kindred, and tongue, and peo-



ple, and nation. Rev. iv. 9. When God chose his people, he foreknew that man would fall, and the whole human race would lose their purity, and become transgressors from the womb. Isaiah, xlviii. 8. He therefore chose them to complete salvation and absolute purity, that they might be without blame before him in love. Eph. i. 4. Christ in whom they were chosen, and to whose care they were committed, being constituted the Head of the church, he became the Saviour of the body, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 23, 25. 26, 27. Powerful operations of grace in and upon the church and chosen of God, by which they are purified and made meet for heaven, are necessarily connected with the redemption which Jesus obtained for them by his precious blood. Divine justice was satisfied with the stipulated price, and infinite power secures the purchased possession; such a redemption is suitable to Christians of every rank, and discouraging to none, if its nature be known properly, or what is included in it be duly considered.

Those who come to Christ consider themselves as criminals justly condemned, and therefore in absolute need of a pardon. "God be merciful to me a sinner," is the language of each; and where should such look for relief but to the Saviour, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace?" Eph. i. 7. Gracious souls are conscious of having grievously departed from God. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way;" Isaiah, liii. 6; and have trespassed against our God. But Jesus, to whom the flock belonged, has made satisfaction for the damage sustained; for the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. His people know they have trespassed and are unable to make a recompense; for, being poor, they have nothing to give unto him against whom they have trespassed. Numb. v. 7. But in this doctrine Jesus is represented as the kind and compassionate kinsman who engaged, that for the trespass of his people a recompense should be made unto the Lord. He was therefore wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Gal. iii. 13. Do they consider themselves afar off from God, and desire to be a people near unto the Lord? How cheering to such is the doctrine of redemption! Wherefore remember ye, saith Paul to the saints in his day, "that ye were without Christ,

being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, having no hope, and without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph. ii. 12, 13. For Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (not that he might only open, or put us into a way in which we might possibly attain to glory) but that he might bring us to God. 1 Peter, iii. 18. In this the saints triumph in Heaven, and of this they sing, saying, "Thou, art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Rev. v. 9. Cheer up, ye discouraged souls, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Psalm cxxx. 7, 8.

Consider the Redeemer's priesthood and power are unchangeable. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Heb. vii. 24, 25. You who are now the servants of God, were once slaves to Satan and sin, serving divers lusts and pleasures; wherefore the great deliverance and happy change are entirely owing to the efficacy of redemption.

How thankful ought we to be, who are made free from such an awful state of bondage; "forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Pet. i. 18.

That peculiar and particular redemption of which Christ is the author, cannot justly be deemed discouraging to any who are sensible of their misery, and long for deliverance; because those who are declared in scripture to be personally interested in this special blessing, are described by qualities of mind and exercises of soul, many of which the weakest Christians know and feels himself to be the subject of; such as a conscious sense of spiritual depravity, debt, and danger, joined with an approbation of Jesus, and desires after those blessings which result from his merits and meditation.

May saints rejoice in, and sinners seek after this great redemption, which consisteth in a deliverance from the curse of the law, (Gal. iii. 13,) from all iniquity, (Tit. ii. 14,) from the tyranny of Satan, (1 John, iii. 8. Isaiah, xlix. 25,) the spirit of bondage, (Heb. ii. 15,) the sting of death, the ruins of mortality, (Hosea, xiii. 14,) and from wrath to come, (1 Thes. i. 10.) From these few considerations, the certain salvation of all the redeemed of the Lord may be safely inferred, for the redemption is not

only copious, but durable; all its blessings are stamped with eternity, for Jesus has obtained eternal redemption for us. Heb. ix. 12. Therefore of the way of holiness it is asserted by the lip of truth, that "the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah, xxxv, 9, 10. Once more,

Fifthly. The doctrine of final perseverance can scarce be thought discouraging to the saints, and none but such ought to be encouraged to hope they shall be saved. Those who are entered upon a journey, and are very desirous of a safe arrival, will not count it a disadvantage to have a faithful and infallible guide, who will watch over them night and day, and never leave them, but conduct them through every difficulty they may meet with. Is it reasonable to suppose they will be discouraged to hear that every thing is previously prepared by a kind friend that went on purpose, as their forerunner for their accommodation while on the road, and their joyful entrance and welcome reception to those mansions where they wish to dwell for ever?

Would it sink the courage of a soldier, or cause him to enter the field of battle with reluctance, because he is given to understand, that no one who draws the sword in favor of his sovereign shall be slain, but shall assuredly gain a glorious victory, and return with songs of triumph to the grand metropolis, the seat of royalty, and there in the midst of millions of joyful spectators receive every mark of honor and approbation which can be desired from the king?

Would the loving spouse, who is at a vast and dangerous distance from her royal husband, be distressed, because he has concerted measures for her honorable arrival at his palace, and sent both his chariot and his guards to conduct her home with a message, assuring her he cannot be satisfied without her presence, and to see her a partner with him on his throne?

If the above cannot be supposed, how then can Christians be cast down by that which ensures their final salvation and the fulfilment of all their vast desires? The doctrine, if properly understood, cannot be deemed in its own nature disadvantageous to any man, though it be frequently abused, as every other part of revelation is, and likewise its Divine Author. It does not encourage sloth, or suppose the exercise of grace unnecessary, and caution needless. No, it is "through faith and patience they inherit the promises." The intention and design of the great and precious promises are to encourage a close adherence to

Christ, and a continuation in well doing, as connected with eternal life. And it is a stimulating motive not to be idle, when they know their labor shall not be in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. xv. 58. To know that the doctrine is a truth, I need only say, Search the scriptures, which testify of Christ's near relation to them: the strength of his love towards them; the infinite price he gave for them; the change he has wrought in them, and the declaration he has made concerning them, that where he is they shall be, and because he lives they shall live also.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *Mysteries of Providence.*

MANY Christians have been, and are stumbled and much discouraged because of God's providences appearing in various instances contrary to his promises. To consider them as real opposites, the good man knows would be daring infidelity. But not being able to reconcile them as relating to himself, he therefore is ready to conclude, that as providences are gloomy and appear against him, he has no right to interpret the promises of God in his favor. It may be a relief to such to observe,

First; Jehovah's proceedings are extremely mysterious. "His ways are in the sea, and his footsteps are not known." As the Governor of the world, "Clouds and darkness are round about him," the most penetrating creature cannot pry into his deep and vast designs. To impeach his conduct is the greatest insolence, to prescribe to him rules of propriety, is horrid presumption. We ought to "be still, and know that he is God," and does all things well; therefore as relating to his will and operations, we may truly say, *Whatever is, is best.* The history of Joseph is a striking proof of the mystery of Providence; the Lord's kindness to him at last appeared, notwithstanding all the awful consequences attending his brethren's cruelty; through ignominy he was brought to honor; through slavery, to liberty and authority; yea, by means of an irksome prison he was advanced to the splendor of a palace. Therefore let discouraged Christians wait with patience, till they see in what their trials may terminate; wherein a decision is difficult and dangerous, a suspension of judgment is prudent and safe; therefore judge nothing before the time.

Secondly; Consider, good and great men have frequently been mistaken when they have ventured to pass judgment on the proceedings of God. David thought he should one day die by the hand of Saul. Provi-



dence wore, for a time, such a gloomy aspect, that he concluded the prophecies and promises respecting him would never be accomplished, and that the messengers of God were liars. Jacob, in a trying period, said of Divine dispensations, "All these things are against me." And yet those very providences brought him into such a state of honor, comfort, and tranquility, as he never before enjoyed. This is further evident from good Asaph's query, "Will the Lord cast off for ever: will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in his anger shut up his tender mercies?" Psalm lxxvii. 7, 8. And so awful and intricate were the Divine proceedings toward holy Job, that he appeared to his friends as a singular object of God's displeasure. Yea, he himself verily thought the Lord counted him as an enemy, and treated him as such.

You who think there is no sorrow like unto your sorrow, attend to the lamentation of that holy man of God, which he uttered in the anguish of his spirit, and the complaint which he made in the bitterness of his soul, recorded in chap. vii. from verse 3, chap. xiii 24, 27, chap. xvi. and chap. xix. 6, 21; and yet before the commencement of his trials, and after their accomplishment, Jehovah declares him to have been not only truly religious, but the most eminent of all his servants then on earth; and Jeremiah, who with remarkable courage pleaded on Heaven's behalf against a revolted, God-provoking nation, though he had sweet intercourse with the Most High, yet, through a complication of difficulties and trying dispensations, he said, "Surely against me is he turned." Lam. iii. 3. Such discouragements have not only attended some few individuals who have been called to bear the burden and heat of the day, but have accompanied the people of God in general, while in this vale of tears; for "Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." Isaiah xlix. 14. The above, and many more instances of the like kind, are left on sacred record, not for our imitation, but admonition: these mournful proofs of human weakness may serve to convince us of our incapacity to discover, in dark dispensations, the harmony and connection between the kindness of God's heart, and the operations of his hand; likewise of the necessity of walking by faith, and not by sight. Those, therefore, "who are in darkness, and have no light," are graciously invited and kindly encouraged to "trust in the name of the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God." Isaiah, li. 10. "You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mer-

cy." May the discouraged Christian then come to the same resolution, which that eminent man of God, did, saying, "Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him." Job, xiii. 15. Consider,

Thirdly; That by such trying providences the Lord discovers to his people what is in their hearts (see Deut. viii. 2,) by which their humility and repentance are promoted, and their dependence on God increased; they are thereby put upon self-examination, in order to know why the Lord contendeth with them: each one, therefore, with solemn seriousness, is brought to interrogate conscience, saying, What have I done? And seeing the absolute necessity of direction, support, and pardon, they become more frequent and fervent in prayer. Like Jacob, they retire from the world to wrestle with God; and being encouraged by his precious promises, are therefore resolved not to let him go without a blessing; therefore they cry unto him day and night, (Luke, xviii.) praying without ceasing. And many kind interpositions of Providences are recorded in scripture, and are still experienced by his people, who have by adverse dispensations been stirred up to seek the Lord with their whole hearts. When Jacob wept and made supplication to his God, the terrible prospect of his brother's approaching him at the head of a furious army, breathing vengeance, was changed into a melting scene of tender friendship and affection. Esau's dreadful designs were at once dismissed; and instead of killing, he salutes his brother with kisses of kindness, and generously offers his service for his future protection.

Thus providences are in fact designed to fulfil the promises of God in a way which prepares the minds of his people for the reception of the favor he intends to confer; so that God's wisdom, as well as his goodness, power, and veracity, becomes the object of admiration; for thereby the Lord makes crooked things straight, and rough places plain, humbles and yet helps, discovers the corruption of the human heart; and thus from a sense of meanness and misery, difficulty and danger, deliverances appear more conspicuously the effects of wonderful grace.

Thus God trieth the righteous by a suspension of promised mercies, which delays are often interpreted as denials, through the prevalency of unbelief. But let tried Christians consider the conduct of Providence towards the heirs of promise, as recorded in scripture, in order to the support of hope, and a patient waiting for Christ. Abraham was kept waiting five-and-twenty years, and then with joy embraced the promised son. Again, consider, promised mercies frequently are mistaken in their first

appearance, through their being viewed by the eye of sense and reason, as clothed with the garb of misery. The choicest mercies have commonly come in disguise; therefore who can by present appearances know what is good for a man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? Eccles. vi. 12. However, it is evident, from an impartial survey of Jehovah's conduct, that the methods he takes to accomplish his own gracious designs, and his people's holy desires, are all worthy of himself, though frequently the very reverse of the plans of finite wisdom; as remarkably evidenced in his dealings with Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, and many others whose religious characters shine as stars of the first magnitude in the horizon of grace.

Fourthly; Another spring of perplexity arising in the minds of many, respecting the providences of God, is, mistaken views of the nature of Divine promises. Spiritual blessing promised in the scriptures are frequently construed as including certain degrees of temporal felicity. Such an interpretation prevailed among the disciples of Christ; and being disappointed in their hopes of such enjoyments, therefore *sorrow filled their hearts*, the expectation of earthly dignity and worldly splendor beclouded their minds, and darkened their understanding respecting the spiritual glories of Christ, the nature of his kingdom, and designs of his death. Though there was an inconsistency and real contrariety in nature between the *proceedings* of God and his *promises* as interpreted by them, yet afterwards, when favored with a clearer understanding of the scriptures, they saw a happy harmony, and an inseparable connection between them, and rejoiced in the accomplishment of the promises of God, which were all found yea and amen in Christ Jesus. To prevent the like mistake among believers in future, the apostle to the Hebrews points out the various trying providences attending the worthies of old; who wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, but through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises. Therefore, having nothing of this world is not inconsistent with inheriting all things which relate to the world to come. The Lord has promised to provide for his people's real wants in this life. He hath said, "Thy bread shall be given, and thy water shall be sure;" "your heavenly Father knoweth you have need of these things." "He careth for you,"—but he hath not described the quality or quantity of earthly good, with which you shall be fed. Poverty, yea extreme poverty, has been the lot of many who were evidently the heirs of glory. The churches of Christ

in Macedonia were in deep poverty. Yet many of the children of God were poorer than they, to whose relief the said churches contributed, even beyond their power, of which the apostle Paul, who was a witness, bears record, 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. "And unto the church in Smyrna write these things, saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive, I know thy works and tribulation and poverty, but thou art rich." Rev. ii. 8, 9.

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, (saith a compassionate follower of Jesus,) hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?" James, ii. 5. The same inspired writer even supposes a brother or sister to be naked, and destitute of daily food, ver. 15. Such have therefore been spoken of by the appellation of *poor saints*, Rom. xv. 26. A distressed saint may lie at the door of a rich sinner without receiving a crumb of relief, and appear as if forsaken by God and man. But oh, how great the change! How vast the difference in eternity! He who seemed as if neglected by Heaven and earth, ascends at death to glory and to Abraham's bosom; while the sumptuous living sinner sinks down to hell, and being in torment, asks in vain for a drop of water to cool his scorched tongue. But of Lazarus, it is said with an air of sacred pleasure, *now he is comforted*. Again,

Fifthly; Some have great discouragements and perplexity, arising from the failure of what they have considered as special and direct promises made to them in particular, as relating to the path of duty, or the enjoyment of some future good. The persuasion of promises being made to them in particular arose perhaps from some portion of scripture being impressed on their mind, the terms and language of which were exactly suitable to what they had been seeking the Lord about, and therefore deemed expressive of his mind in that particular; the failure, therefore, of these, discourages their hope respecting the fulfilment of *those* which relate to their eternal salvation. For the relief of such I would observe, that though it is not denied but in some special cases the Lord may have favored some of his people with intimations of his mind in the manner aforesaid, nevertheless there is commonly danger and disappointment attending such a construction of scripture in ordinary affairs; for we need no new revelation to point out the path of duty, the scriptures being sufficient for such a purpose, and a more sure word of prophecy than any thing referred to above. A criminal curiosity to pry into, or sinful anxiety to know future events, the Lord in mercy may reprove in his people, by dis-



appointments. The design of the promises of God is to encourage faith and hope in the Lord, that he will provide what he sees necessary for, and give what is good to those who fear him; but not to make a previous discovery in what manner he will support and supply. Even Moses, the man of God, seems to have been mistaken in regard to the time when, and the means by which the Lord intended to accomplish the deliverance of his people from the bondage of Egypt; for when he defended the injured Israelite, and avenged him that was oppressed, he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would have delivered them, but they understood not; Acts, vii. 25. And instead of his being then embraced as a deliverer, he was informed against, and banished as a delinquent. He continued in a state of exile for forty years; and afterwards, when the Lord sent him from Midian to Pharaoh, to demand in his name Israel's release, instead of deliverance, their bondage was increased, and his conduct they severely censured; on which account he returned unto the Lord, and said, "Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all;" Exod. v. 21—23. And when providences turned up contrary to what Jeremiah expected, he in the bitterness of his soul uttered these awful words: "O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived." Jer. xx. 7. From the above instances it is evident that persons may be in some cases disappointed in their most sanguine expectations in regard to the dispensations of God in this life, and yet the foundation of their hope remain unshaken in reference to eternal salvation. May Christians be cautious, and not use the word of the Lord in such a manner, and for such purposes, as were never intended! To interpret the designs of God, from detached sentences, either impressed on the mind, or as first presented to the eye on opening the sacred volume, is very injudicious, and has an entangling tendency; therefore, as the apostle says, "We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Col. i. 9. In order to which may you be enabled to compare spiritual things with spiritual; 1 Cor. ii. 13. Col. iii. 16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you in all wisdom."

May we all consider that the mistakes of eminent saints are recorded, not for our imitation, but our admonition, and to prevent overwhelming despondency on viewing our own mistakes, and to show the ne-

cessity of a strict careful examination of ourselves, fervent application to God, an humble dependence on him, connected with cheerful obedience to him, and a patient waiting for him. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope." Rom. xv. 4.

## PART III.

### PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES.

[There are several stumbling-blocks in the way of Zion's travellers, which are more properly classed under the head of "practical difficulties" than under either of the preceding; viz. such as arise out of the sinful conduct of professors of religion, the enmity of the world, and the heresies of false religionists. These impediments in the way to heaven will now be briefly considered.]

### CHAPTER I.

#### *Sins of Professors.*

THE disposition and conduct of some professors of religion is very stumbling to serious inquirers after the way in which they should walk.

First; A proud censorious spirit, condemning the weak as worthless, and treating inferiors with an air of contempt, is very trying and discouraging. But who hath despised the day of small things? God does not, therefore men ought not; and it is certain a humble Christian cannot. Let the weak and discouraged Christian contemplate the compassionate Saviour, who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. The lambs he will lay in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young, and to them who have no might he will increase strength; the strongest believer was once a babe in Christ; the tallest cedar once was not superior to the lowest shrub; and the stoutest oak was once in as tender a state as a feeble straw. How unreasonable then to despise the weak, seeing those who have arrived to the highest eminence in religion, in whatever sense they may be said to be great, yet their beginnings were but small. Those, therefore, who are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves. Suppose the weak, is the Lord's

express command. Hence, says the apostle, "let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way." Rom. xv. 13.

Secondly; Loose professors are extremely pernicious; of such the apostle spake with weeping, and pronounced them enemies to the cross of Christ. By them saints are discouraged and sinners hardened; through them the good ways of God are evil spoken of, and religion reproached, the righteous traduced, and the name of the Lord blasphemed. When professors fall into sin, the cry of the profane is, *This is their religion*. But the established Christian with sighing says; No, such miscarriages are owing to its absence. But weak believers are not only grieved, but silenced and confounded: and when those who are eminent for God are overcome by the deceitfulness of sin or the violence of temptation, Christians in general are alarmed, as when a standard-bearer fainteth; and some are thereby for a time so discouraged, that they dare not profess religion, fearing they should likewise act an unbecoming part, and deeper wound its reputation. Thus they linger, though they love, not daring to proceed for fear of falling. Others, to avoid being sharers in reproach, sigh and go backwards into a state of pretended neutrality. Again, some notorious transgressors, termed *sinners in Zion*, when reprov'd for their sins, and admonished according to Christ's direction given in the scriptures, and especially such as are excluded from church communion on account of their abominations, will, from a spirit of revenge, join affinity with the world, and Satan like, turn accusers of the brethren with whom they were connected, and of whom they will speak all manner of evil. Such impenitent apostates, stooping to the low office of cooks in the devil's kitchen, will frequently dress up the imperfections of professors of religion, so as to gratify the taste of the ungodly, to whom the sins of the saints afford high entertainment, and on which the profane frequently feast with sweet satisfaction, as saith the Lord; "They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity." Hos. iv. 8, 9. In consequence of which those who sigh for the abounding abominations of the land, and are active for God in Zion, become the derision of fools, and the song of the drunkards; on which account they frequently adopt David's lamentation, who on the like occasion said; "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar." Psalm cxx. 5.

Such things, it is confessed, are very trying; but shall religion be deserted be-

cause it is dishonored? No, God forbid; the Lord's cause is good and honorable. Christ and religion are no worse for being betrayed, denied, or misused. Shall the rebellion of some be urged in favor of disloyalty to our heavenly Sovereign? Ought we to be inactive because others are indolent? Or resolve not to be true, because they are treacherous? When Christ was deserted by various pretended friends, he addressed his few remaining followers thus: "Will ye also go away?" To which Peter replied in the name of the rest; "Lord, to whom should we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." May every lover of Jesus be in like manner resolved to adhere to him! How rational the resolution! How becoming the determination in every point of view! For Jesus is possessed of every thing relating to eternal life: he, and he only, can satisfy and save the immortal soul. Is sin dreaded as aforesaid? Let such consider which is the most likely method to be kept from its prevalency. Surely those whose daily cry is, *Hold me up and then I shall be safe*, cannot with calmness conclude, that those are most likely to be heard of God and kept from sin who disregard his authority, and live in the neglect of duty. A prevailing sense of weakness is no indication of danger; no, pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. The Christian ought to consider, the fewer they are that engage heartily in the cause of real religion, and the greater the opposition made to it, the more is his assistance needed. May such resolve "to go in the strength of the Lord God, making mention of his righteousness, and of his only." Though you proceed with trembling steps, the Lord can make you say and sing with holy triumph, "The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girt with strength." "The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people; blessed be God." 1 Sam. ii. 4. Psalm lxxviii. 35. Those who continue cool spectators, caring for none of these things, would do well to consider that the Lord allows of no neutrality in the important and perpetual contest between the kingdom of Heaven and that of hell, but says, "He that is not for us, is against us." He abhors a state of indifference in matters of religion. "I would," says he, "thou wert cold or hot; so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." Rev. iii. 15, 16. How alarming the language in Deborah's song respecting those of the aforesaid disposition and conduct! "Curse ye Meroz (said the angel of the Lord,) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to



the help of the Lord against the mighty." Judges, v. 23. May the supine Christian hear and fear!

## CHAPTER II.

### *Enmity of the World.*

SOME are stumbled on account of the cross, or the reproach and persecution attending religion. A prospect of suffering in their persons, property, or character, is grievous to nature and trying to grace. In regard to reproaches from men, we may observe, those who do not deserve them, need not dread them. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." 1 Pet. iv. 14. "Cruel mockings, reproaches, and persecutions" (Heb. xi. 36, 38) have been the lot of the righteous in every age, who are generally called to endure a great fight of afflictions as soon as they are illuminated, partly whilst they are made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whilst they become companions of them who are so used. Heb. x. 33. "If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer persecution; for as of old, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." Gal. iv. 29. But although such treatment is very trying, yet consider how much more dreadful are the frowns of God and the stings of conscience. Jehovah's smiles will compensate for, and infinitely outweigh the revilings of men, or the rage of the devil; yet a little while, and the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary shall be at rest. "Hearken unto me (saith the Lord,) ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law. Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings, for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." Isaiah, lviii. 7, 8. Attend, O discouraged Christian, to the Saviour's cheering language. He says, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven." Luke, vi. 22. Accordingly we find the apostles "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name's sake;" "therefore (says Paul) I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in distresses, for

Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Cor. xii. 10. Wherefore let no man's heart fail him because of these things, nor be discouraged because of the way: the Lord is able to make you rejoice in tribulation, through which you must enter the kingdom, and at last will crown your conflicts with victory, and turn your pensive sighs into perpetual songs. Keep in view the blessed Jesus as your pattern, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; return not railing for railings, but pity and pray for them who despitely use you and persecute you, saying, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Take care you are neither ashamed of religion, nor a shame to it; therefore in all things be ye circumspect, consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. As he through the hope set before him endured the cross, and despised the shame, (Heb. xii.) therefore arm yourself likewise with the same mind; (1 Pet. iv. 1.) and having put on the whole armor of God, stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, be strong in the name of the Lord, lift up your banners, and fight the good fight of faith. The heroic Paul, when he reconnoitred the host of inveterate foes, and viewed surrounding difficulties and approaching dangers, said, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy;" and when methods of prudence were proposed by his weeping friends, to avoid impending danger, he, considering the advice inconsistent with Christian duty and dignity, replied with warmth and holy vehemence, "What mean ye to weep, and break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts, xx. 24; xxi. 13; 2 Cor. iv. 17. His heavy trials, which continued through life, he considered as light and short, when compared with the durable delights in a future world, *even a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Then those who have faithfully followed the Lord through difficulties, dangers, and death, will meet with peculiar approbation and distinguished honors; then the Captain of our salvation shall recount his worthies; Nahum, ii. 5; Rev. vii. 14; who will appear with the ensigns of victory and the trophies of triumph in the new Jerusalem, of whom the applauding inhabitants will with joy sing, *These are they which came out of great tribulation.* Then the trial of your faith will be found more precious than gold which perisheth. The believing Hebrews therefore took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a more enduring substance; and

Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of reward. James, v. 11. "Behold, we count them happy who endure;" "for in due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not;" "therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. xv. 58.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *Errors of False Religionists.*

[The errors of false religionists are of two kinds, speculative and practical; and when the former are cherished they infallibly produce the latter.

First; Speculative errors present difficulties.] Some are prevented attending to practical religion, by being told believers are not in any sense under the law. By the law we are frequently to understand the covenant of works, or that compact and agreement which a God of kindness and condescension made with Adam, as the public head and representative of his offspring. Adam was under a natural and necessary obligation to obey his Maker's will, and was absolutely dependent on God's sovereign pleasure for the continuance of his happy existence. A right to everlasting life he could never have procured by his most ardent affection and strict obedience to God and his law; the Lord therefore kindly connected the promise of life with man's natural duty, and threatened death in case of failure. Thus Adam's motives to obedience were increased, being made a trustee for his numerous descendants. In that covenant a small and easy test of his subjection to God was fixed upon. Nothing more than a prohibition of one tree, while the vast and various productions in the garden of God were liberally granted for his pleasure and profit. In the midst of which likewise flourished that which was an emblem and pledge of the promised blessing, called *The Tree of Life*, which would serve to confirm his faith in his covenant God, and invigorate his hope, that his obedience might be secured, in order to the enjoyment of the gracious reward, and that he might escape the threatened punishment. But, alas! notwithstanding the said agreement was so advantageous in its nature, it was broken by our first parent, whereby all right to life, on the footing of law, was for ever forfeited,

according to that covenant; and death, the threatened penalty, was incurred, not only respecting his own person, but his posterity also. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all, for that all have sinned." Rom. v. 12. Through the offence of one many be dead, v. 15; for by one man's offence death reigned. By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men; for by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; v. 16 to 19. The apostle proves there was a covenant or law before that given by Moses, according to which the whole human race were under the sentence of condemnation; for until the law (given on Mount Sinai) sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; Rom. v. 13, 14. The law of Moses was not given that sinners might obtain life by it; for by the law is the knowledge of sin; Rom. iii. 20. It was added because of transgressions, (Gal. iii. 19,) that the offence might abound, (Rom. v. 20,) that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may become guilty before God; therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Rom. iii. 19, 20. That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident; for the just shall live by his faith, and the law is not of faith, but the man that doth them shall live in them. Gal. iii. 11, 12. But whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. James, ii. 10; for considering the law as a covenant, one sin destroys a title to legal life, and exposes the guilty to its awful penalty: for as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Gal. iii. 10; Deut. xxvii. 26. Believers, therefore, are not under the law as a covenant; their expectation of, and right to, eternal life, does not rise from their personal obedience, nor is their hope of freedom from punishment founded on any compensation which they have made or can make for their crimes; through Christ they are dead to the law as promising life, or punishing with death; they are neither under its promise nor its penalty: their covenant connection with the law is dissolved, and a marriage to Christ commenced, that they might bring forth fruit unto God. See Rom. vii. verse 1 to 7. That real believers are *not under the law, but under grace*, is an undeniable truth. But it is equally evident, *they are not without law to God, but under the law*



to Christ. That there is no contradiction in these scriptural propositions will appear, if we consider the following things:

First; That by the term *law*, we are to understand the rule of moral, and likewise positive obedience. Moral obedience ariseth from our natural connection with God, (as the Author of our existence,) and with our fellow-creatures, and consisteth in supreme love to God, and an equal love to our neighbor as to ourselves; so that the whole law is comprehended in love. Moral commands arise from, and are founded on, the natural propriety and fitness of things, and therefore are binding on all rational creatures in this world and that which is to come. Whilst the relation continues between the Creator and his creatures, their obligation to love him as their chief good, and to live to his honor as their ultimate end, can never cease; the law, therefore, by which such love and obedience are enforced, cannot possibly vary. Jehovah does not demand our highest love merely because of his authority over us, but because of his own infinite excellency and relation to us. He does not become the only proper object of our supreme love because he hath commanded us so to love him, but his being the only *fit* object of our superlative affection is the reason why he requires it. The moral law does not make any duty fitting and proper, but declares and requires what is so. Moral commands, therefore, differ from,

Secondly, positive appointments; the latter arise simply from the will of God, and are therefore alterable in their nature, being altogether dependent on his pleasure and sovereign determination; the propriety of moral obedience, the light of nature or right reason may discover. But no idea can be formed of positive obedience, but in consequence of Divine revelation; the former is due from every creature, whether angelic or human; the subjects of the latter are particularly described in the holy scriptures. Thus the whole code of ceremonial laws was confined to Israel, as a shadow of good things to come, and was done away in Christ, who was the substance which these laws tended to exhibit, and the end in which they terminated. But the moral law ever was, and ever will be, equally binding on all: it being the rule of that love and obedience which Jews and Gentiles naturally owe to Jehovah, the supreme good and fountain of existence; and to each other, considered as his offspring. Notwithstanding the ceremonial law under the Old Testament was accomplished in Christ, and done away by his death, he then, as it were, nailing it to his cross, yet many Jews who believed in Jesus continued much attached to the shadow, though the

substance was come. The apostles, therefore, labored to prove the abrogation of that law by which those ceremonial observances became binding on the church of God, in the former dispensation. These appointments had been revered and justly esteemed, and they were to Israel very beneficial for two purposes: to humble them under a sense of pollution and guilt, and liability to punishment, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, to which they had a retrospect view; and to direct their faith and hope to the appointed Saviour and promised Messiah. The law was therefore to them as a school-master unto Christ. But after Christ was come, they were no longer under a school-master. Gal. iii. 24, 25. Those painful and tedious appointments becoming unprofitable, the great apostle labored to convince these Judaizing believers, that they were not under that law. They were under no law as giving a title to salvation; for if there had been a law given, (of any kind,) which could have given life, verily, righteousness should have been by the law; (Gal. iii. 21;) and the gospel would have been overturned, and the death of Christ quite unnecessary. With great difficulty were the Jews brought off from the ceremonial observances in the days of the apostles; therefore, those inspired penmen, in speaking of the church of Christ as delivered from the law, and those tedious, painful, and *now* unprofitable appointments, which were abrogated and done away, make use of the most contemptuous terms when speaking of the subject; calling them beggarly elements, carnal ordinances, &c. But the duties of the moral law are enforced by the strongest motives. In that law Paul delighted after the inner man; and the charge of making it *void* through the faith of the gospel he denies with holy vehemence, and rejects the very idea with indignation. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: Yea, we establish the law. Rom. iii. 31. See a sermon on this text, by the Rev. C. EVANS, entitled, The Law established by the Gospel; Dr. Gill on the Law in the Hand of Christ; and Mr. Booth's Death of Legal Hope, &c.\*

Thirdly; From the universal extent of the moral law, the apostle proves that Gentiles as well as Jews were under sin, and

\* The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are of a positive nature, and dependent entirely on the will of God, as revealed in the scriptures of truth; there the subjects are delineated, the manners of administration pointed out and illustrated, the end and design of each ordinance explained, and their duration in the church till the second coming of Christ, abundantly confirmed. The moral law, though distinct from, yet is connected with, and runs through every positive institution; whereby obedience to them is enforced on all those who are described as proper subjects, which believers would do well to consider.

therefore exposed to punishment; that a title to life could not arise from, or spring out of human obedience, because, according to the rule of righteousness, every one is found culpable. Being, therefore, condemned for dispositions and acts contrary to law, consequently by the deeds of the law no flesh living could be justified: a believer's title to life, and exemption from punishment, springing from another source. Therefore, such are said not to be under the law, but under the administration of grace; for the law is the ministration of death to every transgressor, and by it indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish are denounced against every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But our dear Immanuel having fulfilled its precepts and endured its penalty in favor of his people, has thereby delivered them from deserved punishment, and given them a right to life, founded on his infinite merits. Believers are therefore delivered from the law as a covenant. From it life is not expected by them, nor by it death inflicted upon them as aforesaid, because they are not under the law, but under the powerful influences, encouraging promises, and copious blessings of grace. However they do not, they cannot from thence infer, that their obligation to love and obey God is thereby diminished, but on the contrary, infinitely increased.

If any, professing godliness, deny the law of the Lord as the rule of obedience, charity obliges us to hope their meaning is injudiciously expressed; for some people's words and ideas are extremely unsociable, and keep at a vast distance, and differ so much, that a reconciliation is scarcely ever expected. But those who deliberately maintain *believers are not under the law as a rule of life*, and act from such a principle, give full evidence that they are grossly ignorant of (not to say at enmity with) the nature of God, his government, and gospel. A more pernicious sentiment, or a greater absurdity, was never invented, than the aforesaid Antinomian tenet. It tends to destroy every idea of good and evil, of right and wrong, by denying the existence or use of that by which the nature of thoughts and actions is tried and discovered. It renders believers incapable of sorrowing for sin, either as in or done by themselves or other Christians. For where there is no law, there is no transgression. It makes penitence an infallible mark of impiety, and delight in the law of God a delusion; it tends to prevent a believer from praying for Divine direction; because, however he wander, he is never wrong, nor ever in danger of stepping aside out of the path of duty, being not obliged to walk in any. A believer must not pray to be kept

from evil; lest it grieve him, for sin he cannot, do what he may, sin being a transgression of the law. Nor can he ask God to forgive him his debt, being confident he does not owe his Lord one farthing. What ever may have been the case heretofore, he being now a lawless person, no demand can be made upon him. In a word, Antinomianism teaches a believer neither to fear God nor to regard man; for, according to it, he cannot be guilty of offending the one nor of injuring the other; for as there is no law, cruelty is not prohibited, nor kindness required; but truth and treachery, profanity and piety, love and hatred, are equally agreeable to believers.

"But, brethren, ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and been taught of him as the truth is in Jesus." Eph. iv. 20, 21. You will not only rejoice in your relation to the Lord, but each believer ought to consider himself as under infinite obligation to love him, to obey him, and to adhere to him, becoming the nature of his connections with him, even as a subject to a sovereign; (1 Thes. ii. 12; Col. i. 10—12;) a spouse to her husband; (Eph. v. 23, 29;) a soldier to his general; (2 Tim. ii. 3;) a servant to his master; (1 Pet. ii. 16; Rom. vi. 16—22;) and as a child to a tender compassionate parent. Be ye, therefore, followers of God as dear children. Eph. v. i. "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how you ought to walk, and to please God, so ye will abound more and more," knowing that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully. 1 Thes. iv. 1; 1 Tim. i. 8. "For this is a faithful saying, That they which have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men." Tit. iii. 8. "And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. ii. 29. Nothing is more evident than that believers are not under the covenant of works, but under grace. But what then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid! Rom. vi. 15.

Secondly. [Practical errors present hindrances. *First:*] Though darkness and doubts respecting the moral law be removed, others are stumbled in respect of the Lord's positive appointments; partly through the neglects of some, and the contemptuous manner in which others treat the sacred ordinances of the gospel, who are notwithstanding had in reputation for religion. Young Christians are commonly much influenced by those they value and have a veneration for; and, therefore, when they observe such who have long known and loved the Lord, living in the neglect of gospel ordinances, they are ready to conclude,



that for them to take the lead of such eminent Christians would be rash and precipitate; and have the appearance of pride and presumption. They, therefore, through false modesty, or real fear, keep back from telling what God has done for their souls, and making a visible profession of Christ in his solemn appointments. By delays, their zeal for Christ and the love of their espousals are greatly abated, and then objections in abundance arise against its being their particular duty on account of not having such a lively frame of mind as is thought necessary for such solemn proceedings. Thus, through their neglects, others are discouraged and prevented bearing a testimony for Jesus, as he has directed those that love him should.

For the *relief, direction, and animation* of such discouraged believers, I would propose to their serious consideration the following things:

First; the kindness of Christ in abolishing the vast number of ceremonial observances which were binding upon the church in the Mosaic dispensation, and which were to Israel difficult, painful, and very expensive, called therefore a yoke of bondage; and as he has appointed only two positive ordinances to be observed by his followers under the gospel, viz: Baptism and the Lord's Supper, how ungrateful is it to refuse obedience or a compliance with what is so mild, so merciful, when compared with what he made the indispensable duty of those whose privileges were inexpressibly inferior to yours!

Secondly; Though inquiring Christians ought to regard the conduct of others, and are directed to go by the *footsteps of the flock*, and to be followers of *them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises*, yet none are to be imitated further than they are followers of Christ, however eminent they are or may appear to be. The more eminent a man is for piety and talents, the more pernicious is his example when he is remiss in, or forsakes the path of duty. Perhaps some would have remonstrated against the detestable contrivance to change Jehovah's glory into the similitude of an ox, had not Aaron, the saint of God and priest of the Most High, entered deep into the design. But as things were, the people acquiesced with pleasure, and danced for joy. Had their elevation been a sure sign of God's approbation, all would have been well; for the congregation had a very comfortable time, a delightful opportunity, till they were interrupted by Moses, who, though naturally weak, yet rebuked the transgressors with pungent severity. Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor, so doth a little folly him that is in

reputation for wisdom and honor. Ec. x. 1. Therefore call no man master on earth, relating to sacred things. It is the example and authority of Christ, your Master in heaven, who is Zion's King, which you are conscientiously to regard. You ought to love and respect all that love Jesus, but at the same time consider you *serve the Lord Christ*. And it is to your own Master you stand or fall. To him only are you accountable. None can prove they have a dispensation granted under his hand for the neglect or changing any of his appointments; and indeed none to plead for the power of granting indulgences in his name, save the man of sin, and those delegated by him. But even supposing others to have obtained such a dispensation, what proof can be given that *you* are included in the grant? Stand not, therefore, O believer, waiting to see what this or the other good man may resolve to do, nor perplex your mind about Christ's conduct to them. Think of Christ's reply to Peter when he was so inquisitive about his brother John, saying, "Lord, what shall this man do?" How keen, and yet how kind was the Redeemer's answer to the impertinent querist! "If I will that he tarry till I come, *What is that to thee? follow thou me.*" John xxi. 22.

Thirdly; Consider, the Divine authority is not to be trifled with. Two sons of Aaron were struck dead for daring to deviate from the Lord's command. And Moses, the man of God, had like to have lost his life through his postponing a matter of duty, probably in compliance with the solicitations of his spouse. Perhaps you may be told by some, that an attendance to such appointments is unnecessary, as they are not saving ordinances. It might not be amiss to inquire of such people, What are saving ordinances? Where are they to be found? If none are saving, then, according to the objection, none ought to be attended to. No works of righteousness should be performed, because salvation is not of works, but of grace. It is astonishing such a mongrel maxim should ever be used by those who abhor *Antinomian liberty*, and *Arminian legality*, seeing the nature of both are therein united. It is the genuine offspring of those two very opposite and equally absurd sentiments. Has Jesus in very deed lost all his authority, that his appointments should sink into insignificance? and has Christ done so little for his people, that they are under no manner of obligation, out of gratitude, to act for him? Has the love of Jesus lost its constraining influence? And ought Christians to be really indifferent about serving God any further than they can merit by it?

Is the dying request of dear friends usually regarded by the surviving relatives?

And shall not our best friend, our dear dying Immanuel, be listened to with cordial affection, when he appointed the ordinance of the Supper, saying, "This do in remembrance of me!" Afterwards he sent from heaven, by the apostle Paul, a renewal of his request to the churches. See 1 Cor. xi. 23. His ordinances are his palaces where he shows his glory, and feasts with his people, saying, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Come forward, then, ye friends of Jesus, follow his example, and receive the kind memorials of his love.

*Secondly*; Divine requirements being superior to the ability of men in their present fallen condition, have been exceedingly perplexing to many; especially such as feel themselves without strength, which the scriptures declare them to be for whom Christ died, (Rom. v. 6,) and to whom he says, Without me ye can do nothing; John, xv. 5; whose experience of their utter inability and absolute dependence on the Lord coincides with what the apostle expresses concerning himself and his brethren, who were even able ministers of the New Testament. Their language is, Who is sufficient for these things? 2 Cor. ii. 16.

We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. From a consciousness of personal inability, joined with a conviction of their absolute and necessary obligation to obedience, arise various difficulties relating to the *equity* of God in requiring that of his creatures which he knows and declares is not in their power to perform. To assert and maintain that men have an inherent power to turn to God and embrace the gospel, and glorify him in a course of holy obedience to his law, *without* the infusion of supernatural principles, is to oppose the positive declarations of God's word respecting the necessity of regeneration, and the impossibility of those who are in the flesh doing any thing pleasing and acceptable to God. See Rom. viii. 5, 8. But those who oppose the doctrine of free grace are constrained to plead for the power of man to love and obey God, representing men's inability as absolutely inconsistent with scriptural commands and exhortations to obedience and faith; these, on the one hand, declaim with an air of triumph on the absurdity of supposing God to require impossibilities; in which those heartily concur who hold the truth in unrighteousness, and represent men as quite blameless, though disobedient, because they have no power of themselves to obey. Various methods have been taken to apologize for man's imperfections, and extenuate his guilt. As men are naturally disaffected to God, it is no wonder they should endeavour

to new model his government according to their different inclinations, in order to keep conscience easy, and support a pleasing expectation of future happiness without holiness; or being beholden to his clemency and grace. Every opposition to the gospel, every false scheme of divinity, agree in supposing the law of God naturally too severe; and that it ought to be, if possible, accommodated, and rendered agreeable to men's present condition; though they greatly differ as to the manner how it may be accomplished. And those who think the law of God cannot be altered or explained so as to suit the carnal mind, and having an equal aversion to internal purity as to the law which requires it, therefore plead for an exemption and total deliverance from its hateful authority, esteeming it a peculiar privilege to settle if possible in the province of Antinomianism; a state so far from God, that the wretched inhabitants suppose his dominion does not extend to them. All false systems unite in proof of one important truth, which is, that till God's law be approved of, as just in all its demands and awful denunciations, the gospel will never be properly understood and cordially embraced; which the following brief remarks may perhaps sufficiently evince, as well as prepare the way to a solution of the difficulty in question.

First; Some confidently assert that on the failure of man in his obedience, the perfections of God obliged him to *alter* the constitution of his government so far, as that there was no need at all of Christ's death to procure an exemption from punishment. That *repentance* and *pardon* are connected by the law of *natural equity*. That Christ came not to make a reconciliation for iniquity, but only as a pattern of acceptable obedience, and to confirm his doctrine by sealing it with his blood. But, in confirmation of the truth for which he was condemned, Christ could have prayed to his Father, who would have sent more than twelve legions of angels to have delivered him from death. But how then (said he) should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be, (Matt. xxvi. 53, 54,) for without shedding of blood there is no remission. Heb. ix. 22. Admitting Christ came only as an example, will it not follow that the law which he came to obey required purity of nature and perfect obedience; seeing our pattern was the subject of both? If the law did not require perfect obedience, but *repentance* was substituted and accepted in its stead, and Christ came to set us an example *how* we might obtain salvation; is it not natural to infer, that in order to his being a proper pattern to us for *such* a purpose and end, he should have been *deficient* in his obedience, and the sub-



ject of *sincere repentance*? and thus have demonstrated for our encouragement and imitation, that though he was *imperfect* as we are, yet by being *penitent*, he obtained forgiveness of all his imperfections. This scheme, it must be acknowledged, so far as relates to *acceptance* with God, entirely excludes the necessity of Christ; he being neither a proper *pattern* to show men *how* they might obtain salvation, nor its *procuring* author. However by such a rejection of Jesus the scriptures are fulfilled, which say, If there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness had been by the law. Gal. iii. 21. And if righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Gal. ii. 21. If the death of Christ was entirely in vain, his laying down his life, when there was no need for it, cannot be deemed an example *worthy* of our imitation; for no man, however heroic, has a right to throw away his life to no purpose. So far from its being virtuous, such conduct would not only be imprudent, but extremely sinful. Can we suppose Christ came into our world on a *needless* errand, and shed his blood in *vain*? Yet shocking as the supposition is, it must be granted, as an established fact, *if* there was any law existing which could have given life. For nothing could be more evident, than that if men could have answered the demands of the law, there would have been no need of the obedience and death of Jesus, according to the reasoning of the great apostle, whose judgment in divinity few will care to dispute. This system, therefore, tends to *embarrass*, instead of solving the question, respecting the *equity* of God in requiring that of his creatures which they are now unable to perform.

Secondly; Some suppose the difficulty would be removed if it might be allowed that Christ by his death procured or engaged the Father's love to sinners, so far as to obtain a *relaxation* of that law under which they originally were, and establish a milder system of government suited to the condition of his rebellious subjects. But this plea is quite inadmissible, because the love of God, from which salvation springs, was the *cause* of Christ's coming to die for transgressors. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." John, iii. 16. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, that God sent his Son into the world, that we might live through him." John, iv. 9. "Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." Chap. iii. 16. Christ did not procure a new remedial law, because that *law* under which sinners *are*, requires perfect obedience, on pain of perpetual punishment. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the

book of the law to do them, and as many as are of the works of the law are under its curse." Gal. iii. 10. The law under which sinners *are*, is that according to which the world stands condemned as criminal at Jehovah's bar, and by the deeds of which no flesh shall be justified in his sight. Rom. iii. 19, 20. Those who think a relaxation of the law is obtained, ought to point out wherein the *abatement* consisteth, that men might keep in a happy medium, and not presume to go *beyond* nor *fall short* in obedience to its precepts. Will the Lord indeed allow men to have other gods besides himself, or to worship him in a way contrary to what he has appointed? Will he hold them guiltless that take his name in vain? May people now lawfully forget to keep holy the sabbath day? Has Christ released men from their natural obligations to parents? Or given them a license to murder, to live in uncleanness, and falsely to accuse their neighbors, or covet what is the property of others? If moral commands continue in full force, as is abundantly evident from the New Testament, wherein then does the alteration consist? Does the law cease to take cognizance of the heart, and being *less spiritual* is it therefore *more agreeable* to the carnal mind? If that be the case, how can *mental* acts be condemned by it, which the scriptures *positively* declare they are? Impure desires are by it deemed adultery; hatred, murder; and covetousness, idolatry. See Matt. v. 28; 2 Pet. ii. 14; 1 John, iii. 15; Col. iii. 5. The language of Christians in the apostolic day was, We know the law is spiritual. Rom. vii. 14. It is holy, just, and good. Rom. vii. 12. I delight in it after the inward man, says Paul, verse 22, so then with my mind I serve the law of God, verse 25. The law of which the apostle spoke, and in which he delighted was that which slew him, that commandment which was ordained to life, (but as a criminal,) he found to be unto death. Verse 10, 11. He was delivered from it as a covenant, but under it as an unalterable law, verse 6, 7; as a covenant it became weak, (that it could not give life to the sinner,) not weak in its own nature, much less wicked, but weak through the flesh. What it could not therefore do in favor of the guilty, was done by Jesus, who did not blame the law, but justified and satisfied its demands, and condemned all opposition to it, even *sin in the flesh*. Rom. viii. 3. The law under which Christians are, requires truth in the inward parts as much as ever, and cannot alter whilst Jehovah remains the same: for God is a Spirit, and they that worship him *must* worship him in spirit and in truth. John, iv. 24. If then both the *matter* and *spiritual nature* of moral obedience remain

the same, notwithstanding men's inability; it is evident the law by which obedience is enforced is not *altered*, and that a new remedial law is a *fiction*. Besides, if the law became unrighteous when its subjects became ungodly (which would be blasphemy to suppose,) God would certainly have repealed it, and not sent his Son to honor an unjust law, at the expense of his blood. Finally: If the Divine law ceaseth to require perfect obedience, saints will at last rise in obedience superior to the law under which they are; for *the spirits of just men will be made perfect*, and when so they will love God more than he desires they should, unless the law *rise* and *fall* in its requirements according to the *inclination* of its subjects, on which absurd hypothesis the notion of a new law seems to be founded. The gospel exhibits new motives to love and obedience, and graciously conveys new principles, in consequence of which saints yield to God new obedience, and by his authority attend to new positive ordinances, for new and special purposes; and are accepted of God, and approach him under new characters, in a new and living way; and are encouraged by new and better promises, in consequence of the new and well ordered covenant of grace, under which they are. But though he make all things new in respect of acceptance with him, and enjoyment of him and old things pass away in favor of them who inhabit the new Jerusalem, yet as God is the same, without variability, in his own adorable perfections, infinite beauty, and boundless authority, he cannot therefore alter his moral law, considered simply as a law, without giving up his claim to Deity, because moral obligations arise from that natural connection and relation subsisting between God and rational creatures, considered as the productions of his power. Hence it is that no alteration in them can possibly diminish their obligations to him.

"Our revolt was a practical declaration that he was not by nature God, nor worthy to be glorified as God. To give up the law in favor of his rebellious creatures, must therefore be the same in effect, as for God to give up his own divinity, and ungod himself in the sight of all his dominions, to gratify a rebel."\* It is no new thing for professors of religion to show an inclination to *excuse* themselves, and throw the *blame* upon God; a certain wicked and slothful servant, when called to an account by his master, could say, "Lord, I knew thee to be an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed, and I was afraid, and went

and hid my Lord's money." Matt. xxv. 24. Sinners in general think their case would not be so extremely bad as the scriptures assert and they frequently fear, were they *fairly* dealt with. Instead of taking blame and shame to themselves, their powers are employed to find out other methods to appease conscience, and support hope, than that which is set before them in the gospel. Therefore,

Thirdly; Some apprehend the difficulty may be solved by supposing a certain degree of grace bestowed on all men, in order to enable them to perform what is necessary to the enjoyment of God's friendship and favor. But the difficulty is rather increased than diminished by this contrivance. For,

If such degrees of grace be necessary to enable men to obey, and render their disobedience inexcusable, it necessarily supposes, that unless such a degree of what is called common grace was given them of God, they could not have been judged blameable for the want of obedience. If they were not blameable before, or antecedent to the supposed grace being bestowed, they certainly were not liable to punishment. And if not liable to punishment before they had this common grace conferred on them, how is this common grace an advantage? seeing that without it they were safe, but the possession of it has rendered their state at best precarious.

Again; if such grace be given not so much for their advantage, as to vindicate Jehovah's character, which is by some supposed to be the design of it (for men, being not culpable without it, but in consequence of it, could have done very well had it never been bestowed; for where there is no blame, no punishment can in equity be inflicted;) I say if this common grace, or light within, or whatever name it may be called by, be given for the purpose of vindicating the character of God as a lawgiver and judge, it is necessarily implied or pre-supposed, that without such a bestowment, his conduct would have been liable to censure and impeachment, and not at all capable of being defended as equitable and just.

Further; If without the impartation of the aforesaid grace, men would have had cause to complain of unfair dealing, what is called common grace is, in fact, no other than a common debt, which God could not justly withhold from any man. Thus the doctrine of common grace represents the Lord as neither generous nor just. It is the same as saying, If God will please to do us justice, we will out of complaisance call it grace. But, as a proof of esteeming what we call grace a proper debt, and no real favor, we, in our hearts, verily account, and are bold to declare that without such a bestowment, we should have had cause for-

\* See Mr. Joseph Bellamy on the Nature and Glory of the Gospel, page 21.



ever to complain of harsh treatment. Thus it appears that all erroneous systems, however widely they differ, agree in tacitly charging God and his law with injustice in condemning for sin; and that the enmity of carnal men is such, that they cannot be reconciled to his government unless certain concessions be made on his part to obtain their forgiveness of the supposed injury. However, it is evident, that approving views of the requirement of God's law are absolutely necessary, in order to admiring views of the grace in his gospel. For where condemnation would be unjust an acquittal is no favor; and where obedience is not due, it cannot be justly demanded.

Fourthly; Another method of accounting for God's requiring perfect obedience of imperfect men, is the consideration of our being represented by Adam in the covenant which was made with him. The reasoning of many eminent men has been thus:—"We had in Adam full and adequate ability every way proportionable to the nature and extent of duty; and though men have lost their power to obey, God has neither lost nor given up his authority to command: therefore it is our duty to exert not only the strength we are now possessed of, but likewise the strength we should have had, supposing our first parent had continued in that state of purity and power."

That Adam was the covenant head of his posterity, appears evident from the scriptures, and I hope has been proved under another particular head. And that advantages and disadvantages naturally result from representation, according as representatives act in their public character, none, I presume, will deny. The covenant made with our first parent was most certainly a righteous constitution; and had the condition been performed, we should all have admired, not only the equity, but the kindness of the compact. But, as success does not make a transaction equitable, nor does a failure constitute a stipulation wrong which is naturally right, we may rest satisfied, that it was impossible for an infinitely holy God and an innocent creature to enter into an agreement essentially wrong. Therefore, we ought to be forever silent, in respect of censure and complaint.

Though this last-mentioned method of accounting for the Lord's requiring of us what is superior to our present power be less exceptionable than any of those before referred to, yet it does not seem to come fully to the point, or cast sufficient light upon the subject; for it seems contrary to the common or known rules of justice and equity, to punish on the account of not performing what is *naturally* impossible to be performed.

Hence, some who have endeavored to hold up the doctrines of grace as objects of ridicule and contempt, have boldly asserted, that according to these doctrines, future judgment would be a mere farce. For that God might as justly punish slow moving animals for deficiency in swiftness, and those for not flying who have no wings to fly with, nor in any respect formed for such a motion, as to punish men for not doing what they cannot possibly accomplish, but is as much above their power as to create a world. Such kind of *checks* the adherents to truth have frequently met with. And such reasoning, or rather declamation, has been very stumbling to weak Christians. Some have been severely tried by the above misrepresentation of gospel truths, and tempted to think what they dare not utter.

For the relief of such, I would propose to their calm and candid consideration a distinction between natural and moral inability which seems necessary to be *well understood* in order to obtain consistent views of Divine revelation, relating to the requirements of God's righteous law and the nature of his precious gospel.

By natural inability, is intended a want of a natural capacity or opportunity to know and do what is commanded, or an absolute defect in the natural powers of a man's mind or body, by which he is rendered incapable of acting although his will were bent upon the performance of his duty. Whatever totally prevents, or is an absolute obstruction in the way of a person's knowing or doing any thing, which renders the acquirement impossible, though he be ever so desirous of accomplishing it, is what I wish to have considered as included in natural inability.

Moral inability consists in a disinclination to what is good, or a dislike of, and aversion to, what God has made a person's duty. That I may be properly understood, I would further observe, that by natural power and ability, is intended, the possession or enjoyment of such power and properties of soul and body, as are necessary for the purpose of mental and corporeal actions, and being in a situation suitable for the exertion of them.

By moral ability is intended a suitable disposition, which consists in a holy inclination, a propensity of mind to what is truly good. To illustrate and point out the propriety and utility of the above distinction, for the relief of entangled minds, I shall endeavor to demonstrate.

First, That natural inability, as above stated, is not a criminal defect; and that,

Secondly, Moral inability is inseparably connected with fault, and cannot possibly be considered as an excuse or palliation of

blame, but on the contrary, that a man is culpable, because of his inability to obey; or that criminality increases in proportion to the degree of moral impotency.

That natural inability is not a criminal defect, or culpable deficiency, will perhaps appear evident, if the following observations be duly attended to.

First; Though men's powers of mind and body are no doubt greatly impaired by the fall, or the entrance of sin, yet the scriptures do not seem to intimate that *weakness* in either is sinful; they are spoken of as pitiable infirmities, but never as punishable faults. Therefore it is written, As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. He considers our frame, and remembers we are but dust. Parents, by whose pity the Lord illustrates his own, know how to make the distinction respecting their children, and would be cruel if they did not. Supposing a son in the height of some criminal proceeding should break his legs, would it not be deemed cruel, not only to punish him for the criminal action by which he came by his disaster, but for his not walking, which he would be very glad to do if he could. Upon this self-evident principle of equity, Mephibosheth founded his plea, when accused by his servant of disloyalty to King David his sovereign. He loved David's person and government, and he pleaded, that his not accompanying him in a time of trouble, when he fled before his unnatural son, was not owing to *disaffection*, but *Thy servant is lame*.

It is not the sin of the blind that they do not read the scriptures; nor are the deaf blameable for not hearing the sound of the gospel: nor the dumb culpable on account of their not pleading for God. Nor is it the duty of any to work or war with their hands who have none. Nor are any blamed for being sick, though it should be unto death. The reason is, because they *could not be* or *do* otherwise if they *would*. Though Paul's bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible, yet he did not consider himself criminal on that account; but rejoiced in his infirmities, yea, most gladly rejoiced in them, that the power of Christ might rest upon him; but he did not rejoice in his sins.

Secondly; Deficiency or weakness in mental powers is not criminal; for was that the case, the weakest men would be the most wicked, and those who are superior in natural parts would always excel in piety, which is contrary to fact, as founded on observation and revelation. Men are dead in sin, but that death does not consist in a *deprivation* of *natural* faculties. When rationality is absent, the words and actions of such people are never deemed

punishable, because they are not accounted criminal. But if the fault lay in *natural* weakness, the *less understanding* and reason a person is possessed of at any time, the *greater* would be his *crimes*. And instead of not being punished for injuring others, such ought to be punished with greater severity on that account.

Thirdly; In regeneration the Holy Spirit does not create new *faculties*, or bestow a new set of *natural* powers; he does not produce "a new head, but a new heart." by infusing new principles and holy dispositions. But if a *deficiency* in *natural* powers was the *fountain* of fault, or the source of blame, from whence criminal actions proceed, there would be a necessity for the production of new faculties, or otherwise a removal of their natural deficiencies. And if so, the surest evidences of a gracious change would be a strong memory, a fertile imagination, a fund of wit, and a profound, deep understanding, or clear ideas, and strong reasoning. In short, an assemblage of fine brilliant parts would, in that case, be the best proof of true holiness. And thus the devil might perhaps be admired for his purity for according to that mode of reasoning Satan might be proved a delightful saint. No greater natural powers are necessary to love God, than to hate him; to serve him, than to oppose him. Therefore God does not require more of any man than the right use of what he hath. And surely it is not *wrong* to require what is *right*. God does not require any thing unreasonable; he requires only what he has a right to, and deserve; even all the heart, all the soul, and all the strength. He does not require in point of degree the like of all; for "to whom much is given, of them he requires the more." Luke, xii. 48. It is each one's *all* that he demands; he does not require his creatures to be alike strong in mental powers: he never intended they should. Angels excel in strength; but he requires all his rational creatures to love and serve him, with all the strength they have. He could not require more with *equity* to his *creatures*, nor dispense with less injustice to *himself*. He requires nothing *naturally* impossible to be performed. He has not made any thing the duty of his creatures which exceeds their natural ability, nor does he punish them for not acquiring or doing what is naturally beyond their power to perform. As men's natural capacities and situations are very different, he does not therefore require all men to be alike knowing, nor does he require knowledge above and beyond the means of information. He does not condemn those who have no revelation, for not knowing what is only knowable by revelation; nor expect of those who have the scriptures to know a



little more than is revealed by them. Hence, as to those things which are only revealed as matters of fact, that they are ignorant *how* they are, is not the sin of any man. Though God exhorts to liberality, yet none are required to give liberally who have nothing to bestow. Duty is ever measured by natural ability; and where that is wanting, the Lord accepts of a *willing mind*. See 2 Cor. viii. 12. Where the disposition is right, and the design or intention good, the want of ability to act as intended, excuses the person from a charge of criminality in that respect. In a word, the good man is not blameable because he cannot do so much for God as he would; nor is the bad man commendable, because he cannot do evil according to his will and desire. Many wicked men would be greater villains than they are, if they knew how. But though they have not ability or opportunity to act agreeably to their inclinations, none surely will commend them on that account. See Acts, xxiii. 12. 1 Kings, viii. 18.

As commendation and blame do not result from natural ability or inability, but from dispositions and voluntary acts, therefore Jehovah's conduct stands evidently clear from the imputation of injustice or cruelty, seeing his requirements are proportionate to, and are nothing more than a right use of the natural powers, and the privileges his creatures possess. His commands are not grievous in their own nature, whatever they be to our corrupt minds. They are agreeable, and suited to the natural *powers* of men, however contrary and disgustful to their natural *inclinations*.

Secondly; If we attend seriously to *moral* inability, we shall discover thereby the awful condition in which men naturally are, and the absolute necessity of omnipotent grace to deliver them from a state evidently helpless, and truly deplorable. For such cannot love God, nor contribute in the least to their own deliverance; and yet their criminality is equal to their inability. A sinner while unrenewed by grace cannot love God, obey the law, or embrace the gospel. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Rom. viii. 7. The wicked *will* not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts. Psalm x. 4. Such do not *like* to retain God in their hearts; therefore *desire* not the knowledge of his ways. Rom. i. 28; Job, xxi. 14. Yea, they treat him with scorn and disdain. Wherefore do the wicked condemn God? Psalm x. 13. They being the subjects of dispositions contrary to his holy nature, are therefore alienated from the life of God, and dead in trespasses and in sins. Eph. ii. 1; chap. iv. 18. The natural man is blind to the moral excellency and beauty of

God; to the spiritual glories of Christ and his kingdom. He has no perception of the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. ii. 14. As unconverted sinners cannot be subject to the law of God, so they cannot embrace the gospel. Jesus himself has declared it impossible while they continue in that state, saying, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." John, vi. 44. "The Spirit of truth the world cannot receive." John, xiv. 17. "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word." John, viii. 43. "Their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken." (The reason is added, not as owing to *natural*, but *moral* inability, for) "behold the word of the Lord is unto them a *reproach*, they have no *delight* in it." Jer. vi. 10. Their hearts are destitute of spiritual emotions, and compared to stone; (Ezek. xxxvi. 26;) even to the adamant, (Zech. vii. 12,) which is harder than flint, (Ezek. iii. 9,) and which naturalists have said cannot be broken till steeped in the blood of a goat.\* So then they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God, (Rom. viii. 8,) being under the sole power and dominion of dispositions *averse* to his nature and will.

They cannot love and obey God, till they are inclined so to do; and no man can be so disposed to love God, till he view him as an agreeable object. And God never was agreeable to a carnal mind, it being enmity against him, on which account it is not, *CANNOT* be subject to him. Rom. viii. 7. Such will neglect and despise God, while they continue to prefer other things before him. Those therefore who are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, cannot possibly esteem him as the chief good; and unless he be loved as such, he is not, as God, loved at all. Those who love the praise of men more than the praise of God, *CANNOT* seek the honor which cometh from him only. For every one if not prevented, will undoubtedly pursue what he prefers, or act according to his prevailing inclinations. Those, therefore, could not believe in, or adhere to the humble Jesus, who were ambitious of human honor. To such he said how *can* ye believe which receive honor one of another? John, v. 44.

But some may ask, "May not such persons love God, repent and believe the gospel if they will?" Answer, "Most certainly they may *if they choose* to do so." There is nothing to prevent their doing so, wherever the gospel is published, but their own criminal dispositions. There is no bar in their way, but the wickedness of their

\* Plin. Nat. Hist. book 37, chap. 4.

hearts. Whosoever will are invited to come and take of the waters of life freely. Rev. xxii. 17. They have faculties or powers of mind adequate to what God requires of them. It is not owing to the want of natural ability, as before stated, but they have no *moral* ability to perform what is good; their impotency consists in an *aversion* to the things of God. When that is removed the difficulty is over. For, where God is loved, sin will be hated, Christ admired, and the gospel will be received and embraced, with cordial affection and faith. But while men are in a carnal state, they *cannot* choose what is spiritually good; for that would suppose them capable of choosing what they do not approve of, or of preferring what they do not esteem, but to which they have a fixed aversion. Whilst a person sees no comeliness in Christ, wherefore he should desire him, he cannot possibly choose him as the chief among ten thousand—his all in all; which believers do. Nor can he hate sin till it become disagreeable to him, or sincerely seek the salvation of God till he feels he wants it, and knows its worth.

The question therefore should rather be, Whether any unrenewed person ever did, or possibly can choose to love God, hate sin, and cordially embrace the gospel? For, if none while in that state or condition ever *did* or *can*, make such a choice, a *willingness* to such a case is not supposable. If unconverted persons may love God, repent, and truly believe in Jesus, conversion would be needless so far as it relates to such well-disposed persons; for true believing penitents shall be saved. And if so, such may be in heaven who never were born again, contrary to the express and solemn declarations of the Saviour, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. John, iii. 3, 5, 7. Matt. xviii. 3. And if unregenerate persons may love God, and obey the gospel, how, and by what, are we to distinguish between those who are regenerated and those who are not? If they cannot be distinguished who turn themselves, from those whose hearts are turned and changed by the Lord, the apostle's question to Christian converts, *Who maketh thee to differ?* would be quite impertinent. We are taught by the unerring word, that there is a great likeness to, and as close a connection between men's voluntary actions and their internal principles, as between the nature of a tree and the kind of fruit it bears, or a fountain and its streams. Matt. vii. 16, 20; James iii. 11, 12. When a corrupt fountain sends forth pure streams; and thorns, brambles, and thistles, produce figs and grapes; when

the whole course of nature is quite reversed, then, and not before, may we expect a carnal man to choose spiritual things.

But it may be replied, that as man is a free agent, he has power to choose *what* and *when* he thinks proper. That man is a free agent cannot be denied, consistently with his being accountable for his own actions. Man's free agency consisteth in a power or capacity to compare ideas and to give a preference to what appears, all things considered, to be most agreeable to himself. Perfect freedom consisteth in a man's acting agreeably to his own inclination, without any compulsion or restraint. A man, therefore, being a free agent, will act agreeably to his own mind; therefore free agency is a farther confirmation of man's moral inability. For, as Divine things are, in their very nature, disagreeable to the unrenewed sinner; therefore as a free agent he will, and cannot but choose the contrary, as being agreeable to the desires and bent of his soul. If it be said, "Man has a determining power over his own will, and therefore his will acts as he directs it, and consequently he is capable of making a commendable and virtuous choice;" this indeed is the dernier, or last resort of most sensible Arminians. It does not seem very intelligible to talk of a power over a power, resolving to resolve, or directing that by which a man is guided, and leading what he follows. However, granting all that can be desired, yet man's moral inability remains just as before stated. For supposing a man to direct his will what to choose, he is sure to direct it to choose that which he thinks is best, or what is most agreeable to himself. The choice, therefore, which he is supposed to direct his will to make, cannot possibly be in favor of true religion, while spiritual things are disagreeable to him; which they will continue to be as long as his heart is unrenewed by grace. For the first supposed act of his mind, by which the subsequent act of his will is directed, must be according to the light in which he views the objects to be chosen; and while he does not view the glory and superlative excellence of Divine things, he cannot give a preference to them; for that would be preferring what he disesteems. And till he prefers them he cannot order his will to choose them. Thus it appears that every wicked man is held by the cords of his sins. Prov. v. 22. He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? Isaiah, xlv. 20. That this awful state of moral inability and death, is a blameable condition, or a criminal defect, will appear from the following observations.



1. It is voluntary and free. Men are not compelled to sin contrary to their inclinations; but the hearts of the sons of men are set in them to do evil. Eccles. viii. 11. Their language is, "We have loved strangers, and after them *will* we go." Jer. ii. 25. "As for the word thou hast spoken to us from the Lord we *will* not hearken unto thee." Jer. xlv. 18. "Israel (saith the Lord) *would* have none of me." Psalm lxxxi. 11. "I called but they gave me no answer; all the day long have I stretched out my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people." (Rom. x. 21,) "which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own *thoughts*," (Isa. lxxv. 2,) "which said unto God, *Depart* from us; and what can the Almighty do for them? *Depart* from us, for we *desire* not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him; and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" Job, xxii. 17; chap. xxi. 11, 14. "We *will* not have this man to reign over us." The result of their consultation against the Lord, and his anointed, is, "Let us *break* their bands asunder and *cast* away their cords from us." Psalm ii. 3. Now if men are accountable for any of their actions, they must be so for those which are voluntary. *Involuntary* acts are not of a *criminal* nature; they do not discover a *bad* disposition. A good man (like Peter) may be bound by violent hands, and carried whither he would not. In that case it is not his *fault*, though he be found in company with men of the most abandoned characters, being there *contrary* to his *choice* or inclination. A gracious person may possibly be delirious, and when so, or in fits of convulsion, may injure himself or his friends; as such frequently discover the greatest antipathy to those whom they most highly esteemed when in their right minds: yet such actions, though very detrimental, are never deemed *criminal*, because they are not then considered as effects of a bad disposition, but as proceeding from disorders in the animal frame. Acts of a nature much less violent and injurious, are accounted *punishable* when there is evidence they are entirely *voluntary* and *free*, or arise from a *bad* design. Involuntary actions may occasion much grief when reflected upon; but a person cannot be said to repent of them, any more than a man can repent because he has not had a proper perspiration, or a regular pulse. Praise and blame, rewards and punishments, are only connected with those actions which are the fruit of internal volitions. Therefore no man will be punished further than he is sinful, and no action deemed sinful which is not the effect of choice. Nor is any man praiseworthy, whatever good may result to others from his conduct, if it

appears that what he did was either the effect of *compulsion*, or with an *ill* design. Mordecai was not under any real obligation to Haman, though he was by him arrayed in royal apparel, and brought through the city on horseback, who likewise proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor!" because what he did was *contrary* to his inclination or choice, being *compelled* through fear of the king's displeasure. Nor were Joseph's brethren commendable, though they were instruments of his advancement in Egypt; because, though they sent him thither, they *meant* it for evil. The devil's testimony in favor of Christ's filial relation to God did not entitle him to *commendation* as Peter's did, though equally true, full, and explicit, because Peter's confession was voluntary, and his intention good. He meant thereby to honor his Lord; but Satan's acknowledgment was either the effect of *constraint*, or done with a design to *sink* the Saviour's reputation. See Matt. xvi. 16; Luke, iv. 41.

Hence it appears, that the criminal conduct of creatures is the effect of their choice; sinful actions are voluntary and free. Therefore no man will be found more sinful than he chose to be; and if any actions are punishable or commendable, it must be those which were voluntarily performed; and consequently the strength of a propensity to evil, or a moral inability to do good, cannot properly be pleaded in favor of sinners, or as an extenuation of guilt. But,

2. Every apology in favor of delinquents, founded on moral inability, is not only absolutely inadmissible according to every rule of equity, but has a direct tendency to confirm the charge of culpability, and to rivet the fetters of guilt. Men are naturally disposed to cover their transgressions, as Adam; (Job, xxxi. 33: Gen. iii. 12,) and fix the charge of blame elsewhere; and through confounding or blending the idea of what is *moral*, with what is *natural*, they endeavor to keep their consciences easy in sin, from such-like excuses as the following:

"If men's propensity to evil be such as that they cannot love and obey God without being created anew in Christ Jesus, they are rather the objects of pity than of blame; therefore we ought not to be condemned for what we cannot help."

To make this soothing inference consistent, these words ought to be added; i. e. *if we would*. Then it would be a good plea in favor of involuntary actions, or *natural inability*; for none are condemned for not doing what they could not possibly perform *if they would*; but as it respects moral inability, it is just the reverse; for the *prevalency* of inclination, or *strength* of propen-

sity to *good* or *evil*, is the very thing from whence degrees in each proceed, and are inferred. Moral evil is that which God *naturally* and *necessarily* hates, and *voluntarily* abhors. His propensity to *purity* is *infinite* and *invariable*. He therefore takes no pleasure in our obedience to his own appointments when performed in a sinful manner; he said to backslidden Israel, "Incense is an abomination to me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting; your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them." Isaiah, i. 13, 14. As no man who is the subject of common sense will infer that, because Jehovah has an infinite strong *propensity* to purity, and cannot but hate sin, therefore he is not *glorious in holiness*; or that because he *cannot* lie, *cannot* deny himself, therefore there is no need to resolve with David to praise *his truth*. Psalm lxxi. 22. Who then, with the least regard to, or possessing any share of reason, truth, and decency, can thus plead? *I am not very bad, because I have a very great and constant aversion to what is good.*

If an intense love to sin, and hatred to holiness, do constitute innocence, or freedom from blame; those who are the *greatest* enemies to God and all righteousness, or most evidently belong to the children of the devil, are the *least* liable to punishment.

If disinclination to duty does free a person from obligation to obedience, a slothful servant would have an unanswerable argument in favor of his conduct; for he might say, (and no doubt could give a sufficient proof if necessary,) that he never *loved* work in his life, that he always had an *aversion* to hard labor, and cannot yet be reconciled to it, being *contrary* to his inclination; and that to which he *always* found, as far as he can remember, an inward *fixed* reluctance. He might add, Sir, when I find work *agreeable* to me, I will attend to it; but till then, you cannot be so unreasonable as to blame me, seeing we are taught to consider that, even in matters of religion, nothing is duty *further* than there is a *corresponding* disposition. I love to look on, whilst others labor, and I hope you will allow me, without offence, to act according to my natural inclination. The haughty servant might likewise say, You will allow me, I hope sir, to do as I please, for I never did *love control*; I was always of an *ambitious* temper, and have even now a *strong* inclination and *intense* desire after *honor* and *authority*. *I wish* you would, and therefore I cannot but hope you will, consider yourself, in future, as under my direc-

tion. Must the notorious thief be acquitted, because he has been long under the power of a strong inclination to injure his neighbors? or the murderer be deemed *less* guilty, because of his *cruel* disposition? Were such a principle allowed, moral government would be overturned; every one might do as he pleases without liability to punishment, especially those of the *vilest* dispositions. And *if* so, perhaps none would deserve *less* punishment than the *devil*.

But it may be said, "Our aversion to God has been transmitted to us from our first parents; and being born so, therefore we hope favor will be shown, as our personal guilt is thereby diminished." Were pity pleaded for, on account of natural inability, or a natural defect and affliction, attending either our mental or bodily powers, the reasonableness of the plea would readily be granted, and evidently appear. But sin is a *moral* defect, and cannot be committed contrary to a person's consent, or without a criminal inclination. The above extenuating plea is only a false gloss. Its genuine sense is the same as if a person should say, when indicted for high treason, "I am, it is true, deemed a traitor, but I hope it will be considered as an extenuation of my crime, that I am the offspring and *seed* of *evil doers*; my family in all their respective generations have been rebels against their sovereign. I have therefore only acted as they have done who are my progenitors. I hope I shall be favorably dealt with, as my disloyalty (if it must be so termed) is a family disposition. Besides, what I have done, arose from a rooted *enmity* in my heart to the *king*, his *adherents*, and *government*, for which I ought not to be censured, as my *ancestors* always discovered, as I have done, an inclination to *overturn* the constitution; and if possible to *dethrone* the sovereign, and bring *him* and all his *children* and *subjects* into perpetual *contempt*. And moreover, as my temper and disposition are such, I *cannot* submit to his *authority*, nor be *beholden* to his *clemency*; having a rivetted aversion in my heart to what he is, has, *does*, and *says*. If therefore my *own* enmity, or my *father's*, against the *sovereign* and his *subjects* have *any* influence to exculpate or diminish the charge of guilt, which doubtless *ought* to be allowed in my favor, I hope, according to the law of equity, my punishment (if any be justly inflicted) will be very small." If it would be an affront to common sense, and contrary to every rule of equity amongst men to plead an *exemption* from punishment, on account of the delinquent's *vile* disposition, or that of his ancestors, how awful then is the deception of those who ap-



prehend they *cannot* be treated by God as *criminals*, because of moral *inability*, or the *badness* of their hearts.

Besides, if the vileness of men's hearts, or their abominable dispositions, *free* them from blame, or *secure* them from punishment, they cannot account them to be *bad hearts*, seeing their *present* peace and *future* hope depend upon them. They are not, it seems, *injurious* hearts, but extremely *beneficial*, providing they be but *sufficiently* vile. Such persons would not know how to go on in religion as they do—they could not sin without *sorrow*, *hope* without *holiness*, *believe* without *evidence*, and *rejoice* in a thing of *nought*; but through the help of a bad heart. They do not think them *deceitful* above all things, and desperately wicked, and that for the *badness* of them they are *accountable* to God. They consider their base hearts, and vile dispositions, as their *best* friends, which *justify* and *sanctify* their *omissions* of duty, and *commission* of sins, as trifling. The gospel libertine, yea, the whole tribe of *indolent*, *light*, and *trifling* professors, seem to consider and use what they call their *bad heart*, as a dark room, or concealed warehouse, where they hope to *hide* their crimes, which, as fast as are committed, are removed thither in expectation of never being found, or exposed to view, being secured by the *lock* of *strong delusion* under the care of carnal confidence, who carries the key of *presumption*, and is lord of all the lumber.

But how very different are the declarations of God, who says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination, HOW MUCH MORE, when he bringeth it with a WICKED MIND?" Prov. xxi. 27. "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten; he hideth his face; he will never see it. Thou wilt not require it." See Psalm x. 11—15. "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." Psalm l. 21. "Yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart, while they live, and after that they go to the dead."—"But know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Eccl. ix. 3; xi. 9.

To conclude,

It is hoped the above remarks may, through a Divine blessing, help entangled Christians, respecting the following important particulars:

1. To behold and admire the equity and justice of Jehovah's government, in requiring nothing above the capacity, or natural ability, of his creatures; and yet continuing the equitable demand of perfect obedience, and not *altering* his law in the least, to suit the base dispositions of his rebellious

subjects, which would have destroyed every idea of authority, and sunk the reputation of God.

2. The necessity of the almighty operations of the Holy Spirit, in changing the bias and dispositions of men, by regenerating or creating them anew in Christ Jesus, and working in them to will and to do of his own good pleasure. For till the sinner's disposition be changed, till he be born again, and become a new creature, he can have no *true* love to God, no *spiritual* delight in his law, no approving views of Christ and his glorious gospel. And yet the change produced does not destroy the natural freedom of the human will; but he acts differently from choice to what he did before.

3. By the distinction between natural and moral ability, sovereign grace is not only defensible against every artful attack, but it appears infinitely great and absolutely free. In every respect it is truly wonderful, because those who are saved were not only miserable, but *inexcusably* criminal, and as such under the sentence of eternal death, from which there could not have been the least hope of deliverance had not *grace* provided relief. If the several parts of the great salvation be surveyed, even from its rise to its final consummation, it will appear entirely of pure grace, infinite, unmerited compassion, and astonishing mercy, which could not be the case if moral death was not a blameable state. Those who want to see the subject of grace treated in a masterly manner, and set in a clear convincing light, I would recommend to their perusal a book, entitled *The Reign of Grace*, by Mr. A. BOOTH, London.

4. Thereby scriptural exhortations to repentance and faith appear quite consistent, which could never be defended if criminality arose from natural, and not moral inability. For in that case, it would be equally ridiculous to call sinners to repentance, as to exhort a blind man to repent of his continuance so long in darkness, and never beholding the surrounding beauties of creation; and no less absurd than to attempt to convince the dead of the crime of indolence, for lying so long in the grave, when their help is so much needed both for work and war. While sin is viewed as consisting in a natural defect, or a deficiency in the natural powers, penitency can never appear reasonable and right. For a man to pretend to repent, when at the same time he considers his fault to lie in a natural defect, which he cannot possibly help, if he would, is like a deaf man considering himself as exceeding criminal because he did not hear to-day, but is resolved he will not be guilty of the like sin to-morrow. It indeed seems to suppose, or require, a very great defect in a man's understanding, to be able to con-

clude, that such a repentance is what the scripture recommends, and the godly possess. But genuine repentance or sorrow for sin appears, from the consideration of voluntary depravity, rational, and every way fitting; because duty is not at all proportioned to our moral inability, or less binding because of our disinclination to good.

5. The doctrine of natural and moral ability is calculated to afford and administer much encouragement to seeking souls, and to comfort those who are really devoted to Christ; for as none can come unto him but such whom the Father draws, therefore spiritual desires after Jesus, and delight in religion, are evidences of a gracious change, holy dispensations, or a new heart.

You whose gifts are small, and natural powers are weak, be not distressed on those accounts; for real grace is much superior to the best abilities and most brilliant parts. Therefore, rejoice, that the Lord hath shown you a more excellent way. Who hath despised the day of small things? The profane world and proud professors may; but God will not. Those who love the Saviour, to whom his person, blood, and obedience, are precious, and his ways pleasant, and whose desire is to walk humbly with God in the paths of purity, though they frequently stumble, and are often discouraged, yea, though they fall, *They shall not utterly be cast down*; (Psal. xxxvii. 24,) but shall hold on in their way, and grow stronger and stronger; (Job. xvii. 9.) For the strength and guide of Israel hath said, "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err." "They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah, xxxv. 8, 10. Those who are not able to plead on God's behalf, but love to think upon his name, are precious in his sight. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels. Mal. iii. 16, 17. Therefore fear not, worm Jacob.

6. The strong believer, however enriched with gifts and grace, is thereby led to various humbling and profitable considerations. However great his natural abilities are, he

is as much under a perpetual necessity to look to, and rely upon the Lord, for gracious influences, as those of the weakest capacity; for a person may possess strong mental powers and be morally weak. Grace may be languid and low, where natural gifts are lively and strong.

Whilst the Christian is the subject of sin, and a propensity to sin is felt, he will see the necessity of perpetual watchfulness, repentance, and prayer, and often cry, with holy Paul, *O wretched man that I am!* For though he is not under the sole dominion of sin, yet he feels and laments a criminal backwardness to good, and a proneness to evil. So that when he would do good, evil is present with him. He being the subject of two *opposite* dispositions, therefore he cannot do the things that he would. His resolutions are feeble and his comforts fluctuate, because his affections are unstable, being sanctified but in part. Sometimes they mount to heaven, and seem fixed on things above, but anon they drop down to earth and sense; and then he complains, and prays as David did, saying, "*My soul cleaveth to the dust, quicken thou me.*" He feels and is assured, that without Christ he can do nothing; yet that inability of which he is sensible, he does not consider as an excuse for the neglect of duty or commission of sin. He does not bless himself that he has got a bad heart, where he may safely deposit his iniquities, and thereby keep his conscience calm.

But the sin of his heart is the sorrow of his soul, and his perpetual plague. It is the object of his hatred, and the subject of his secret and unfeigned lamentation: because the good man is taught to consider moral defects as inexcusable faults.

He longs for heaven, because it is a place of purity where he shall be free from sin as well as from sorrow. While in the body, he considers himself neither where nor as he would be; therefore his desire is to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. And as *he which testifieth these things* saith, *Surely I come quickly*: his heart replies, "AMEN, EVEN SO COME, LORD JESUS."



THE

# DEATH OF LEGAL HOPE.

By ABRAHAM BOOTH.

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.—*Gal. ii. 19.*

## INTRODUCTION.

THE words which contain the important subject of the following essay, being part of that epistle which was written by Paul to the Galatian churches, it may not be improper, by way of introduction, to observe, that in the epistle to those churches, we have an ancient piece of sacred controversy; and that the truth vindicated in it, is interesting to the last degree. For the great question here debated is, in the words of Job, "How shall man be just with God?" Job ix. 2. In the management of which controversy, the great apostle proceeds, under the conduct of the unerring Spirit, with all the *fire* of godly zeal; Gal. iii. 1; with all the *affection* of the tender parent; Gal. iv. 19; with all the *meekness* of heavenly wisdom; James iii. 13; and (I will not say with all the accuracy of logical disputation, but, which is infinitely superior,) with all the precision of divine truth.

Paul was an indefatigable laborer in the vineyard of Jesus Christ and a successful preacher of the everlasting gospel. He was abundantly useful in the execution of his apostolic office, in turning multitudes of sinners "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." Yet, after all his unwearied labors, and all his unparalleled success, he did not assume the least share of the honor. His language is, "not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Nor was he backward to acknowledge, after all the sufferings which he had sustained, and all the works that he had performed, for the sake of his divine Master, that, as a *saint*, he was "less than the least;" as a *sinner*, he was the first and "the chief." Eph. iii. 8. 1 Tim. i. 15. Perfectly sensible that he was utterly unworthy in the sight of his Maker, and that the hope of his soul had no support but sovereign grace, as revealed in Jesus; being well acquainted with the infinite purity of a righteous God, and the sublime

demands of his holy law; he could accede to no terms of acceptance, nor acquiesce in any doctrine which did not provide as well for the *honor* of divine justice, as for the *safety* of the guilty soul which did not maintain the *rights* of a holy law, and display the *riches* of unbounded grace. Such was the faith he possessed, and such was the doctrine he preached.

These truths were dispensed by him among the Galatians, and with a considerable degree of success. Sinners were converted, and churches formed in Galatia, by the instrumentality of this excellent man. For a time, they lived in mutual peace, and regarded the doctrine which Paul had taught, as of heavenly origin. They rejoiced in hope; they ran well, Gal. v. 7, and seemed to bid fair for obtaining the prize. Such were their happy circumstances, for some time after they received the gospel.

But, alas, how soon the face of things was altered! Gal. i. 6. How soon, as to many of them, were their views of the grace of God, and of their justification before him, darkened! For Satan, that arch-enemy of God and man—Satan, that implacable foe to human happiness, quickly began to sow the seeds of destructive error, and to raise up instruments to propagate a perverted gospel. He "transformed himself into an angel of light," and pleaded the necessity of obedience to the law, in order to acceptance with God. Thus were they deceived, under a specious pretence of greater sanctity, and a more than ordinary zeal for the divine commands. The righteousness of Christ, which Paul had described as the "one thing needful" for the justification of sinners, and which they had before regarded as the only ground of their hope, they were afraid to trust, supposing it insufficient. They were taught by the false apostles, and were persuaded, in their own deceived hearts, that they were under a necessity of seeking a *supplementary* aid from their own duties.

This doctrine, so *flattering* to their own

vanity, so *favorable* to human worthiness, and without a professed denial of Christ and his work, they received with all readiness. For it is much more agreeable to the pride of nature, and a far more respectable and popular way of seeking acceptance with God, to use our own skill, and exert our own endeavors, as co-efficients with divine grace and the great Redeemer, than to rely *entirely* on the righteousness of another, and be beholden, *solely* beholden, to a foreign, undeserved assistance. They entered, therefore, on a vain pursuit of happiness, in this plausible and self-pleasing, but delusive method. They clave to the law. They relied on their own duties, as co-partners with Jesus, in performing the greatest of all works, in obtaining the noblest of all blessings, their justification before the Almighty. The awful consequences of which were, they embraced another gospel; made void the necessity of the death of Christ; and virtually renounced all interest in him. Gal. i. 6, ii. 21, v. 2, 4. By such a procedure they became debtors to do the whole law, and were obnoxious to its dreadful curse. Gal. v. 3, iii. 10. And, having discarded the glorious truth which Paul preached, they traduced his character, they renounced his fellowship, and treated him as their enemy. Gal. iv. 16.

Such were the malignant effects of receiving a corrupted gospel. These effects the good apostle beheld with a mixture of indignation and sorrow. Against their destructive and fatal mistakes, he therefore takes up his pen, and makes a resolute stand. The false apostles he considers as their greatest enemies; and as being, in a peculiar manner, accursed of God. Gal. i. 8, 9. He makes it appear, by such a determined opposition to their plausible and prevailing tenets, that when the capital truths of the gospel were corrupted, the peace of the Christian injured, and the souls of men endangered, he had no fear of the hideous charge and popular clamor of "bigotry to his own way," or "rashness and a want of charity for others." In this respect, as in his ministerial conduct in general, he is worthy of imitation by all the succeeding servants of Christ in every age. For, though it be their indispensable duty to "hold the truth in love," and to "follow peace with all men," yet, when the great doctrines of divine revelation are perverted or denied, then they are called in providence, then they are required by the command of God, and the love which they bear to the Lord Redeemer, to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." Nor ought they to regard the persons of men, or fear the consequences which may attend a zealous and prudent defence of the truth.

Happy had it been for the church of Christ in the following ages, if the errors espoused and propagated by those ancient judaizing teachers had ceased to exist, from the time that their strenuous patrons left the stage of action. But, alas, the same temper and spirit still continue, and still prevail! True it is that *names* are changed, and the *terms* of the question then in debate are greatly altered. Now, none professing Christianity pretend to maintain the necessity of *circumcision*, in order to acceptance with God. That is now universally esteemed an obsolete rite; though, by some of old, accounted of great importance under the Christian economy. The same *principle*, notwithstanding, on which those judaizing Christians proceeded in maintaining the necessity of *circumcision*, is still retained, and operates in various ways.

The grand question then was—*In what does that righteousness consist, for the sake of which alone a sinner may be justified before God?* And the matter in controversy between Paul and his opponents, was—*Whether the obedience of Christ, without any addition whatever, was that very righteousness?* Or, *whether some doings or endeavors of their own, were not necessary for that important purpose?* Paul maintained the *former*; the Jewish zealots the *latter*. To this one point may the disputations of Paul with the deceived Galatians, on the article of justification, be reduced; as is obvious from the contents of his epistle to them.

As the same dispute still continues in the world, and as the words which afford matter for the present essay, are happily adapted to cast light on this very interesting subject, it may be no unpleasing, perhaps no unprofitable employ, to consider the capital ideas contained in them, in the following sections. And may the unerring Spirit illuminate the mind, and guide the pen of the writer—that he may not prove an ignorant patron of error, but a well-informed advocate for truth. May the same infallible Guide smile on this feeble attempt for the good of the reader! That the consciences of the unawakened may be alarmed—the minds of the ignorant instructed—the hearts of the disconsolate comforted—and faith and holiness promoted in all into whose hands these pages may come.

## SECTION I.

*What law it is to which the Apostle was dead.*

Our first inquiry must be, *What law it is the apostle designs when he says, "I am*



dead to the law?" We may obtain satisfaction in this inquiry, by consulting the context. Great reason there is to conclude, that the *law* intended here, is the same he repeatedly mentions in the sixteenth verse of the chapter. And it is evident *that* is the moral law. For that is the law to which we are universally inclined to look for justification and life; though by it we can never obtain those invaluable blessings.

When a sinner is awakened out of carnal security, and his conscience is alarmed with a sense of guilt, he naturally looks to some devout and penitential *exercises* of his heart, or some pious and beneficent *actions* of his life. Some doings or endeavors of his own, engage his attention; and, for a while, yield a feeble support for his hope. "What shall I *do* to be saved?" is his language. With this the apostle was perfectly acquainted. He therefore repeatedly affirms, "That by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Rom. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 16. This being an article of great importance, and the legal bias of our minds being so apt to lead us astray, he does not content himself with barely *asserting* that we cannot be justified by it; but he also assigns the *reason*. Affirming that it is impossible for the law to justify any of the children of Adam, because "it is become weak through the flesh," Rom. viii. 3, or the corruption of nature. Human depravity renders a perfect, personal conformity to the divine law, utterly impracticable; and without a complete obedience, justification by it is absolutely impossible.

That it is the moral law he here designs, appears from the opposition there is between the *works* of that law of which he speaks, and the *faith* of Jesus. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ!" But that law, and the works of it, to which the faith of Christ is directly opposed, is the *moral* law. For as to the ceremonial law, it contained a principal part of the *gospel* of the ancient church. Christ in his person and offices; Christ in his grace and work; was prefigured in it, and signified by it. To him it had an invariable respect, and in him it had its final completion. Yes, believer, that very Jesus whom you love and adore; that very grace in which you trust and rejoice, were in that law exhibited as the hope of guilty sinners, and the joy of enlightened saints. Consequently, the ceremonial law cannot be considered as set in *direct opposition*, by the apostle, to Christ and faith in him.

It follows, therefore, that it is the *moral* law he intends, when he says, "I am dead to the law." For it may be placed in such

a *contrasted* view, with the greatest propriety. This law and the works of it, are directly opposite to *grace* and *faith* in a Redeemer. It makes not the least comfortable discovery to a miserable sinner. It knows nothing of pardoning mercy. It says not a word about atoning blood. Being the *formula* of that covenant which was made with man in a state of innocence, it makes not the least abatement in point of duty; nor the least provision, in a way of mercy, in case of failure. Perfect obedience is its constant demand; an obedience, personal and perpetual. Whatever mercy the sinner wants, whatever blessings God bestows, is provided in another covenant, are dispensed in another way.

Again: That the moral law is here intended, appears from a parallel passage in the writings of Paul, relating, as here, to his own experience. "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. Rom. vii. 9. *I was alive*: I supposed myself righteous, I thought myself safe, in virtue of my own obedience. But I was then *without the law*; I was far from being acquainted with its vast extent, and high demands. For *when the commandment came*, shining on my understanding in its purity, and operating on my conscience with power, *sin revived and I died* to all self-righteous hopes. Thus *the letter*, the law that was inscribed with God's own hand on tables of stone, *killeth*; 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7; as the infallible author, in another epistle, asserts. Such, then, is the *law* to which the apostle was dead. And, however strange the doctrine may appear to the self-righteous professor, we may venture to affirm, that no man, after all his resolutions and all his efforts, can ever experience a sense of pardon, or enjoy peace in his conscience; can either live to God in holy obedience here, or have a well-grounded hope of glory hereafter, till he knows what it is to be *dead to the law*. This truth we shall endeavor to prove and illustrate in the following pages.

## SECTION II.

### *Unregenerate Sinners alive to the Law, as a Covenant.*

THE moral law may be considered either as a *covenant of works*, or as a *rule of conduct*. In the *latter* of these respects, it is unchangeable as that relation between God and man, on which it is founded, and therefore, never to be disregarded; as we shall endeavor to show in its proper place. In the former, it may be considered not

only as prescribing *duty*, but as promising a *reward*, on condition of perfect obedience, and as guarded by a *penal sanction*, denouncing eternal death against every offender. To the law, thus considered, the apostle says, "I am *dead*."

When a person is described as *dead* to the law, it is supposed and implied that he was once *alive* to it; that his hopes of justification and life by it, are now *extinct*—and that as a covenant it ceases to have any further *demands* upon him, or to denounce any *threatenings* against him. We shall make the *first* of these particulars the subject of our inquiry in the present section.

When the apostle says, "I am *dead* to the law," the expression implies, that he was once *alive* to it. Death is a privation of life. No man therefore can, with propriety, be said to be *dead* to the law, if he never was *alive* to it. Before regeneration, all men are alive to the law: or, in other words, they seek justification by it. Their hopes are founded upon it; their expectations of acceptance with God and life eternal, arise from their obedience to it. Such are the expectations of every unregenerate man. This is the way which nature teaches: this is a method which pride encourages.

Man being originally formed for a covenant of works, and fitted to live by his own righteousness; being endued with capacities and powers to persevere in holiness, and to enjoy happiness by such a constitution; it is no wonder that he should, now fallen, and while unregenerate, have no idea of living to God, and obtaining salvation by a covenant of a quite different kind. Our first parents, while innocent, having no need of that merciful provision which is made for the guilty, in the covenant of grace, had no revelation of it. Consequently, after the fall, they could have no conception of any such thing, any further than the great Creator was pleased to reveal it to them. And as all the human race are the posterity of that apostate pair; and as we descend from them, as formed for a covenant of works, and as breakers of it; so we not only derive a corrupt nature from them, and are obnoxious to divine wrath; Eph. ii. 3; but also naturally cleave to the legal covenant as that which is suited to the feeble ray of nature's light, and those principles on which we act, so soon as reason dawns. And though nothing but sad disappointment has attended man's endeavors in this way; yet, not being acquainted with any other support against despair, when guilt pains his conscience, his pride still flatters him with a prospect of better success, by means of new improvements in such attempts. Yes,

no sooner are we conscious of guilt, and alarmed with apprehensions of impending ruin, then we flee to the law for relief. Sorrow for our past transgressions, and sincere obedience for the future; forsaking our former evil courses, and espousing the cause of religion; are esteemed the most probable means of procuring the pardon of sin, and the salvation of our immortal souls. Especially, if we have some respect to the general mercy of God, and a partial regard to the atonement of Christ, as supplying the defects attending our own obedience, and inclining the Deity to make proper allowances, and be propitious to us, in regard to our many unavoidable infirmities.

Ready we are to imagine, that as a law requires obedience, and promises a reward to the performer of it, a sincere endeavor to do the best we are able, in our present circumstances, (though we can scarcely hope to arrive at perfection) will be condescendingly regarded by a merciful God; regarded as an undoubted indication of an upright heart, and a sufficient foundation on which to proceed, in applying to us the merits of Jesus Christ. Thus we make our well-meant endeavors to obey the law, a kind of pedestal, on which the *general* mercy of God, and the *conditional* merit of Christ, may be erected to display themselves with advantage, in rewarding the worthy, and distinguishing those who have already so well distinguished themselves as the observers of the law, and the friends of piety. And, in case of a relapse into open and scandalous sins, they who are *alive* to the law, suppose the remedy is obvious. They readily conclude that there must be some *additional*s, in kind, number, or degree, to their penitential and religious exercises. For instance, sorrowing more bitterly, praying more fervently, giving alms more liberally, and performing every religious duty with a greater punctuality and warmer zeal. Thus they think to commute with divine justice, or to quit scores for their offences by their duties.

In consequence of such a procedure, they are either elated with pharisaical pride, or overwhelmed with desponding fears—with *pharisaical pride*, when possessed of a high conceit of the excellence of their duties, and the safety of their state. When they imagine themselves to have performed the conditions required, be they greater or less, they cannot but congratulate themselves on their happy attainments in holiness, and the glorious prospects they have in view. Their own free-will, and the strength of their moral powers, are the idol to which they bow, the god whom they adore. "They offer sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their



own drag." Hab. i. 16. They look down upon the common herd of mankind with a supercilious disdain, wondering in themselves, that creatures of an immortal make should act so ignobly and beneath the man; that they should not assert their native dignity as rational beings, and should perform their part no better, as moral agents. Supposing that it only requires a *good resolution*, in the immoral and profane, to break off their vilest courses; to attain virtuous habits; to perform the conditions required, in order to eternal happiness; and, finally, to receive the promised reward.

Or, admitting they do acknowledge their obligations to *divine assistance*, in attaining their virtuous habits, in performing their righteous acts, and in making themselves differ from others, and even from their former selves; yet, while they are looking to these holy qualities and righteous deeds, as being either the cause or condition, more or less, of their acceptance with God, or interest in Jesus Christ; they are *alive* to the law, and debtors to perform the whole. However amiable in their tempers and conduct, or excellent in their characters among their fellow-creatures; however they may please themselves, or be applauded by others, their state, in the estimate of heaven, is the same with his in the parable, who said, "God, *I thank thee* I am not as other men." The aggravated fault and fatal mistake of the pharisee, did not consist merely, nor principally, in *preferring* his own state to that of other men in general, or of the publican in particular; for he expressly acknowledged his obligations to *preventing and assisting grace*, which enabled him to avoid the sins, and practise the duties he mentions. For, surely, it never can be esteemed such an aggravated crime, for a man of religious character and becoming conduct, when he reflects on the vicious practices of many, which render them a nuisance to society, and a pest to the public, to say, "God *I thank thee* that I am not guilty of such enormous crimes; that I am not abandoned to such evil courses, and lost to all sense of things divine. The seeds of those abominable iniquities, I acknowledge, are deeply sown in my constitution; and, that they have not sprung up to such a malignant height, is owing to thy *restraining grace*." Such language may be used by the *humblest* Christian, or the *highest* saint, without giving any occasion for blame.

The fault, the awful mistake of the pharisee, principally lay in *trusting* to that difference, in *pleading* that preference, in the important article of justification before the tremendous Jehovah. Here he was *chargeable*, as an extravagant boaster. Here he was *condemnable*, as a vile of-

fender. In the momentous affair of acceptance with his offended Maker, he should have ranked himself with the *worst* of publicans, and the most *abandoned* villains. He ought to have considered himself as having *no other* righteousness on which to depend, than what would be equal to their wants, and bring salvation to their souls, were it applied to them. For in that grand concern, the eternal Sovereign has no regard to any thing short of an *absolutely perfect* righteousness. Of this the pharisee was destitute, as well as the publican.

Whatever *difference* may subsist between man and man, as to their moral character and religious performances, it has not the *least* concern in their justification. Of this the poor deluded self-justifier was ignorant. For though he did not pretend that he was *naturally* any better than others; though he did not pretend that his works were *meritorious*, or done in his *own* strength; yet he supposed that he had, by the assistance of grace, performed the *condition* on which the pardon of his sins, and his acceptance with God, were suspended.\*

Such was the state of this pharisee; and such, at the best, are the hopes of all who are alive to the law. When they think of appearing before the great Judge of the world, they look to their own holy desires and pious endeavors, to relieve their anxious minds. In this way is their peace of conscience, such as it is, obtained. This is the method in which they seek to make and preserve their peace with that sovereign Being whose majesty they have affronted, and whose laws they have broken. To the law they appeal, and by it they must stand or fall.

When, on the other hand, this way of seeking comfort fails to afford relief; when a reflection upon their pious performances and penitential exercises yields no consolation; then a sense of guilt overwhelms them with *desponding fears*. The covenant of grace, with all its cheering promises, the blood of Immanuel, with all its infinite merit, are overlooked by them; or, if not entirely overlooked, will afford them no peace, while alive to the law. For as it is the righteousness of the law alone with which they are acquainted, so it is in that righteousness they desire to be found. It is that on which they principally rely; and, without that, they esteem every other thing insufficient. Persuaded they may be that, as their own obedience is greatly imperfect, so they cannot be saved without *some* assistance from him who hung on the cross, or without *some* gracious indulgence from the mercy of God; but, at the same time, neither the atonement of Christ, nor the

\* See Dr. Owen on Justification, Chap. xvii.

mercy of heaven, will support their minds, any further than they suppose themselves to have performed the condition, or come up to the terms on which they imagine *that* assistance is granted, and *this* mercy exercised. So that all their hopes and all their comforts, are ultimately resolved into their own duties—into that by which they suppose themselves to differ from the altogether worthless and vile.

Hence it is evident that the peace of conscience which such persons enjoy, is founded in their ignorance of the evil of sin, and the wrath it deserves. When, therefore, at any time, its infinite demerit appears to a greater degree than common, their consciences are pressed with guilt, and racked with terrors. Amazement seizes their minds, and horror chills their blood. Their cry is, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isaiah xxxiii. 14. And if some fresh opiate be not administered to conscience, or the Spirit of God do not divorce them from the law, and show them a better covenant, their "souls will choose strangling rather than life." Such is the case of a sinner, who is alive to the law, when guilt burdens the soul, and conscience sharpens her sting.

Let the thoughtless sinner, and the self-righteous professor, consider their state, and reflect on these alarming facts. Whether my reader be the one or the other, his state is dangerous. Is he one of those *careless mortals* whose whole time is employed in making provision for the present life, and to fulfil the lusts of the flesh? He is no less under the law, he is no less obnoxious to its awful curse, though he think not at all about it. But can you rest. O, thoughtless sinner! can you be satisfied in such a condition? Can you imagine that your Almighty Maker and Supreme Judge, will be forever as forgetful of you, as you are at present forgetful of him and his worship? Can the Omniscient overlook you? or can he who declares, "I will by no means clear the guilty," suffer you to sin with impunity? No! while his nature is holy, and his word is true; while he hates sin, and has power to punish, it can never be. You may sleep in your sins for a time, but, if grace prevent not, your damnation will not, cannot slumber. 2 Pet. ii. 3. And dreadful indeed will be your condition, if you continue to sleep till fire and brimstone awaken you. "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver!" Ps. l. 22. The rich man in the parable, being "in hell, lifted up his eyes." Then were his eyes opened. The bewitching pleasures of the world had lulled his conscience

asleep. His elevated station in life became a continual prompter to his vanity, and enabled him to riot in the luxuries of sense. Earthly things engrossed his whole attention, engaged his whole life, and left him no time to think about the state of his soul, or the God who made him. The downward road in which he walked, being broad and easy, and much frequented, he forgot to ask himself where it would terminate, till his fleeting moments were all elapsed, and his state was utterly desperate. Thus he became a damned soul and lost his all, before he apprehended his danger. Beware, reader, lest this should be your case! May the children of this world, and the sons of carnal pleasure, be effectually warned by this dreadful catastrophe of their unhappy brother; that they come not into the same place of black despair and endless torment!

Or is my reader a serious person, and possessed of an abiding concern for his immortal soul? Permit me to ask, are you alive to the law, and seeking, by a sincere obedience to it, to gain acceptance with the high and holy God? If so, hear your doom; behold your danger. For thus the Lord and the Lawgiver determines the case: "As many as are of the works of the law, are"—what? pardoned? accepted? blessed? Far from it. They are on the contrary, "*under a curse!*" Gal. iii. 10. "Amazing!" cries one, "that avowed rebels against God, and the open breakers of his law; that they who publish their sins, as Sodom, and hide them not, as Gomorrah; that all such should be under a curse, appears equitable; but that persons who are '*of the works of the law,*' who sincerely endeavor to perform his commands, and are looking, in this rational and popular way, for acceptance and eternal life, that *they* should be in such an awful situation, is quite inconceivable, and highly unreasonable."

To which it may be replied: that all who are "*of the works of the law,*" are under it as a *covenant*. As such, it requires perfect obedience, and perfect obedience it must have, or there is no justification by it. Now the apostle, in this alarming passage, takes it for granted that every man has sinned, and broken the law. Consequently, they who are under it as a covenant, not having abstained from every sin forbidden, and performed every duty required by it, its penal sanction lies against them; it denounces a curse upon them: the awful declaration, therefore, is the language of strict propriety; is the voice of truth itself. How often shall the Most High declare, "that no flesh," that no mortal, "shall be justified before God, by the deeds of the law," or by his own obedience to it, before



you credit the solemn assertion, or believe the humbling truth? Is the condition of your justification so *small*, or your ability so *great*, that nothing will serve but you must perform it yourselves? Remember, ye deluded mortals! remember, that pardon of sin is a blessing so *immensely* rich; acceptance with the infinite Jehovah is a favor so *extremely* high; that if all the cattle on a thousand hills were your own, and, together with the first-born of your bodies, were devoted to God in a burnt-offering, to make an atonement for the sin of your souls; were you to give all your goods away to feed the poor, and your bodies to be burned; all, *all* would be entirely unavailing to procure either the one or the other. For a righteous God cannot accept the performances or the offerings of a sinful creature, as a compensation for the injury done by his crimes. Besides, it is the province of grace, and the work of Christ alone, to obtain the pardon of sin, and render our persons accepted. This is the capital truth of the Bible; the central point, in which all the lines of divine revelation terminate. Yet if, after all, you will appeal to the law, to the law you must go. But remember that, in so doing, Christ shall profit you nothing. Gal. v. 2, 4. So that you have no alternative, but to *keep* it perfectly, or *die* eternally.

### SECTION III.

#### *Believers dead to the law, considered as a covenant.*

We have seen, in the preceding section, that unregenerate sinners are *alive* to the law, as a covenant. We now proceed to show, that believers are *dead* to it, under that consideration. "I am *dead* to the law; ye are *dead* to the law," says the apostle. Gal. ii. 19. Rom. vii. 4.

As all who are alive to the law are seeking justification by it; as their expectations of acceptance with God may be ultimately resolved into some doings or endeavors of their own; some gracious habits or heavenly qualities, of which they suppose themselves to be the subjects; so they who are dead to the law, are entirely divorced from every such expectation. Though they are well acquainted with the beauty of holiness, and far from despising a regular conduct; though they would exert their utmost efforts in a way of duty to God, and earnestly desire to bear a greater conformity to the Redeemer's image; yet they consider these things as standing in another place, and as designed to answer a very different purpose, from that of being causes or conditions,

more or less, of their justification. Yea, whatever assistance they may have from the Spirit of truth, in performing religious duties; or whatever attainments they may make in holiness, through a divine influence; they consider those duties and this holiness, as totally distinct from that righteousness on which they depend; from that obedience by which they are justified.

Once, indeed, they were of another mind, and viewed things in a very different light. Time was, when they thought highly of their own, thought meanly of their Saviour's righteousness. But, by the agency of the divine Spirit, and the instrumentality of the divine law, their case is happily altered. They are brought to see their abject poverty, and to acknowledge their utter unworthiness.

Is the reader desirous of knowing by what means a sinner becomes dead to the law, as a covenant? The great apostle informs us, when he says, "*I through the law am dead to the law.*" The moral law, in the hand of the Spirit, is the honored instrument of producing the happy change. By it the awakened sinner discerns the immaculate purity of the divine nature, and the consummate rectitude of the divine will. Its precepts and prohibitions, containing a complete system of duty, are beheld by him as entirely correspondent with the perfections of the infinite Jehovah. He beholds the unalienable rights of the great Legislator, in the demands of his law; and a discovery of that perfect correspondence which there is between the requirements of the law and the eternal rights of the Deity, evinces to his conscience the holiness and transcendent excellence of the law. Possessed of such a conviction, the sinner beholds, not only its unblemished purity, but also its vast extent. He is obliged to acknowledge that it requires truth in the inward parts; that it extends to all the thoughts and all the desires of the heart. That it demands not only a course of obedience, unblamable in the eyes of men, but a purity of desire, and a spirituality of affection, a rectitude of design, and a perpetual series of action, without a failure and without a flaw, in the sight of the heart-searching God.

By the law, he comes to see the nature and the evil of sin. Sin is "a transgression of the law;" a contrariety to the revealed will, and to the holy nature of God. Nor does it only manifest what sin is, in itself, but also what it deserves. It reveals the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; against every, the least departure from absolute perfection. It denounces an awful curse, and unsheaths the sword of divine justice against every transgressor. Its language

is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." It fastens a charge of guilt on the sinner's conscience, and binds him over to eternal torment.

And as the law teaches a sinner the holiness of the divine nature, and the superlative evil of sin; so he is brought to acknowledge the equity of that sentence denounced against him, and the righteousness of God in the damnation of the guilty. His mouth is stopped; he pleads guilty before his Judge. Sin, he sees, is an infinite evil, and justly deserves everlasting punishment. He is convinced that if the sentence of death pronounced upon him were to be executed in all its rigor, he should have no right to complain. His language is, "the law is worthy of God; my Maker is righteous; damnation is my due." Beholding the aggravations of his sins, and the imperfections of his duties, the depravity of his heart, and the spirituality of the law, he despairs of ever obtaining the favor of God, or peace for his conscience, by any future endeavors. He sees with amazement, and confesses with grief, the pride and the folly of his former expectations of righteousness and life by the law. He lies low at the foot of sovereign mercy. Fully convinced of his absolute need of a Saviour, who can give the law it demands, and rescue his perishing soul from destruction; who can satisfy the claims of justice, and exercise boundless mercy; he is content to be saved by the righteousness of another, and to be forever indebted to free, distinguishing, infinite grace.

Let us hear the great teacher of the Gentiles deliver his own experience in reference to this very thing: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Rom. vii. 9. *I was alive*; elated with a fond conceit of my inherent excellences and moral endowments, I imagined myself safe, I thought myself happy. But, when this delusive persuasion possessed my heart, I was *without the law*. Though for it I professed the highest regard; though to it I endeavored to conform my life; I was entirely ignorant of its spiritual nature, and without the least knowledge of its true design. As the most learned and admired doctors of the age had taught, I supposed that a superficial observance of the duties it enjoins, and an outside forbearance from the things it prohibits, were all it required. Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28, 33, 34, 43, 44. *But when the commandment came*—when I saw its immaculate purity; as an image of the divine holiness, and beheld its extensive demands, as a transcript of the divine will; when I viewed it as demanding perfection, with a sovereign au-

thority, and heard it denouncing vengeance, as with the voice of God, against every, the least offence, then *sin revived*. A clear and lively sense of sin penetrated my very soul. I saw myself chargeable with innumerable transgressions. I felt myself subject to many abominable corruptions. My heart, of whose purity I was before so ready to boast, I found to be "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." The best of my actions, in which I was wont to confide, appeared but splendid sins, and, in reference to my justification before God, I despised them "as filthy rags." In consequence of which, *I died*. My self-righteous hopes, which before had reared their heads aloft, were now dashed in the dust. The sentence of death, as the desert of sin, pronounced by the law, I acknowledged to be just. All my pleas, and all my expectations of life by the law, were then struck dead. Nor did I only renounce my past performances and present attainments, as insufficient and deplorably defective in the account of a holy God, and in the eye of his righteous law; but also despaired of ever doing any thing in future, by any assistance whatever, to win the favor of my Judge, or obtain acceptance before him. So that every self-righteous support was entirely removed, and every avenue to comfort, by my own obedience, was eternally barred.

Thus it was with Paul, after all his sincerity and all his obedience, before conversion; and thus it is with every sinner who is brought to the knowledge of the true God, and discerns the purity of the divine law. For no man beholds the *grace* of the gospel, who does not acknowledge the *equity* of the law. We shall never consider salvation as *divinely free*, till we cordially confess our condemnation to be *entirely just*. But when the purity of the Lawgiver is seen in the flaming holiness of his law, when it denounces its curse against the sinner, and his own conscience, being stung with guilt, confirms the dreadful sentence, and with an awful emphasis replies, "thou art the man"—then the relief provided by grace and revealed in the gospel, is beheld with an ardent desire—is embraced with exuberant joy. Thus, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, the law subserves the gracious design of the gospel. The righteousness and terror of the legal sanction are happily useful, to illustrate the freeness, and proclaim the sovereignty of saving grace.

The sinner being brought, by divine teaching, to see the insufficiency of his own obedience, and to renounce his former hopes, as being no other than a "refuge of lies," is filled with anxious inquiries, how he may escape the wrath to come. Hav-



ing tried every expedient which presented itself to his mind, as any way proper to afford relief to his guilty conscience, and finding them all to fail, he is ready to faint with fear, and sink in despondency. He drops every pretension to personal worthiness, and freely acknowledges himself the chief of sinners. So far is he from advancing a claim to heaven, on the footing of duty performed, that he is amazed he was not long since transmitted to hell for his crimes. But grace forbids that he should be overwhelmed in despair. That same Spirit, by whose omnipotent agency he was divorced from the law, leads him to Jesus. And now, that sovereign mercy to which he submitted with such reluctance, appears with a winning aspect. Now, that boundless grace which he had so long despised, shines with peculiar glory. To that mercy, as revealed in the atonement, he flees, like a murderer pursued by the officers of justice, or like the unhappy man slayer of old, before the avenger of blood; and on this grace, as reigning by Jesus Christ, he rests his all for eternity. Now the everlasting covenant begins to unveil its infinite stores to his ravished view; and the gospel pours its healing balm into his wounded conscience. The crucified Jesus is now his only hope. That he "may win Christ, and be found in him," is all his salvation and all his desire. Riches and honors, crowns and kingdoms, are little, are nothing to him, compared with an interest in the Redeemer. Being "dead to the law," he renounces himself in every view, and reflects on his former ignorance and pharisaical pride with the greatest amazement and the deepest self-abhorrence. Finding an all-sufficiency in the adored Immanuel, not only to supply his wants, but to make him infinitely rich and eternally happy, he rests completely satisfied. The perfect obedience of his divine Substitute, which is revealed in the gospel and received by faith, being that in which Jehovah himself delights, Isaiah xlii. 21, is an adequate ground for his strongest confidence, and an inexhaustible source for his sublimest joy. Such is the state, and such are the views of all who are *dead to the law*.

Having such a discovery of the divine purity and divine law, he is far from boasting over the vilest of men, or the most infamous wretches. The more he knows of God, of the violated law, and of his own sinful state, the more is he convinced that he has reason to say, "behold I am vile!" Yet, at the same time, he dare, as in the presence of God, contemplate the holy commandment, and give conscience her full scope, without fear of confusion; being well persuaded, however aggravated a

charge may be brought against him, that grace has provided, and the gospel reveals a righteousness which is quite sufficient to declare the justice of God in justifying him, even in the worst view he can have of himself; nay, which is incomparably more, in the worst view in which he can appear before the Omniscient. Though he once imagined that the idea of a *just God*, and the fear of *eternal misery*, were absolutely inseparable, yet he now reveres the former, without dreading the latter.

That every real saint is *dead to the law*, and that his whole hope, as to justification, centres in the mercy of God and the merit of Christ, in the grace of the covenant and the blood of the cross, appears from the scriptures with superior evidence. Out of a multitude of instances recorded in the Bible, we will select a few. We will ask some of the most excellent saints that ever adorned a religious profession in any age of the world, or in any nation of men, on what their hopes of acceptance with God were founded? And we shall find that their uniform answer will be, "not on any thing *in* us, nor on any thing done *by* us; but on that GLORIOUS PERSON, and on his FINISHED WORK, who is the desire of all nations, and the salvation of all the ends of the earth."

Job, we know, was a saint of no inferior rank. He was no less exemplary for his piety, than remarkable for his afflictions, and the patience with which they were suffered. He was favored with peculiar manifestations of the divine will, and Jehovah himself declared there was "none like him in the earth." This eminent saint could not be ignorant of the real worth of his personal obedience, nor of the place in which it ought to stand. No; this obedience he found occasion to plead, and speaks of it as an article of great importance. But where, and on what account? Not before the *great Sovereign* of the universe, and in order to *acceptance* with him; but before his *fellow-mortals*, and in vindication of his own *sincerity*.

When his friends, mistaking his case, and not being well acquainted with the methods of providence, charged him with being a hypocrite, and inferred from the variety and severity of his sufferings that he must needs be a wicked man, he pleaded in defence of himself, the excellence of his conduct and the utility of his life. He, as the apostle James requires, proved the reality of his faith and the sincerity of his profession, by his works. He knew that a different conduct from the carnal and profane, was the only thing that could evidence to the world the superiority of his state in the sight of God, or free his profession from the charge of hypocrisy. To this, therefore, he ap-

peals. This he strenuously and justly pleads against the charge of his mistaken friends, in his long controversy with them.

But when the inquiry is, how shall man be *just with God*, or justified before him? and what he is to plead, on what he is to rely, for that purpose? then he considers the state of the question as entirely altered. The venerable saint well knew that as he was before a higher tribunal, and in the presence of a Judge who searches the heart, so the righteousness pleadable there, must be as much superior to what was sufficient in the former case, as the tribunal at which he stood was more awful, the Judge more holy, or the event more important. For who can stand, in any righteousness of his own, before so holy a God, before so righteous a Judge? There he knew that nothing short of *perfection* would be admitted, and that by nothing less could he be justified. He, therefore, entirely renounces his former plea. He drops every pretension to personal holiness. And, so far from advancing a claim on the Deity, he pours out sorrowful confessions of his original pollution and actual transgressions. "Behold, I am vile!" is his language. "I abhor myself," as the filthiest of creatures, as the basest of criminals, "and repent in dust and ashes." Job, xi. 4, xlii. 6. Here we see—not the Samaritan woman, not the Philippian jailor, not the thief on the cross—but the most *eminent saint* of his day, and one of the *holiest* men that ever lived: here we see him bearing the marks of deep humiliation and sorrow, and in the attitude of a miserable sinner! His language is expressive of one whose conscience is smitten with an alarming sense of guilt, who deprecates deserved vengeance, and implores a free pardon; of one who considers himself perfectly on a level, in the sight of God, as to justification before him, with the publican in the parable; and as having no other refuge for his guilty soul, nor any other plea to make than that poor publican had. Divine mercy, manifested in a living Redeemer, was the only hope of holy Job; and the same free mercy, revealed in the atonement, was the hope and the plea of the profligate publican. Job, xix. 25—27; Luke, xviii. 13.

Such also was the conduct of the man after God's own heart. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Ps. cxlii. 2. Language this, very strongly expressive of the mind of one who is dead to the law. These words plainly indicate that David's heart was deeply impressed with an awful sense of Jehovah's immaculate purity, the imperfections attending his own obedience, the extensive demands of the holy law, and the terror of that sentence which was his

righteous desert, and must unavoidably be passed upon him, if tried by that sublime standard of duty, and according to the tenor of his own conduct. And it is very observable that when the Psalmist thus deprecates the awful trial, he considers and styles himself a *servant* of God. But though he assumes the honorable character, he is far from pleading his services, or trusting to his own obedience for justification. Nay, he peremptorily affirms that, before the Lord, *no man*, *no servant* of his, can be justified. To these words the apostle refers when he so often declares, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." This is a capital truth. And till this truth be cordially embraced, till the propriety and foundation of it be clearly seen, no one can form a proper idea either of the character of Jesus, or the grace of the gospel; can either see his danger, or seek for relief.

With this leading truth, the sweet singer of Israel was thoroughly acquainted. Hence it gains admittance into another of his devout odes and inimitable compositions, in which he also informs us what was the rock of his hopes and the source of his joy. These are his words; "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Ps. cxxx. 3, 4. Instructive, important saying! Most happily calculated to rebuke the pride of self-righteous confidence, and raise the hopes of desponding sinners. Here the Lord's anointed flees for safety to sovereign grace, and draws his comfort from pardoning mercy. Being dead to the law, having all his expectations of being justified by it entirely extinguished, he looks to another covenant, and has resource to another plea. Having the awful judgment in view, and considering the issue of such an exact scrutiny, he trembles at the thought of appearing before his immortal Judge, in his own obedience. For in such a way of proceeding, "who shall stand? who can be acquitted?" Not one of a thousand; not one of a million; not one of all the human race. And were it not for that forgiveness which is with God, and is dispensed in the blood of the Lamb, not only the hope of David, but that of every sinner, would have been entirely and eternally eclipsed. But this forgiveness being worthy of God, proceeding from the infinite riches of grace, and equal to the wants of the most enormous transgressor, behold, there is hope for the vilest! **FORGIVENESS!** charming word! Forgiveness with God, with him against whom we have sinned, with him who has authority to pardon, as well as power to punish; solid foundation for your hopes, O, trembling sinner! Believing this declaration, building on this basis, what should hinder, or who has a



right to forbid, that our hopes should rise sublime to heaven? that they should be firm as the divine declaration, and bright as the sun in his meridian glory? Yes, believer, this is your unalienable right; this is your inestimable privilege. For that "strong consolation" the Lord is so willing to bestow, and for which he has made such ample provision, is designed for all those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them." Heb. vi. 18. For such who have *already* fled, for such who are *now fleeing* to Jesus, the appointed refuge; the *immutability* of the divine counsel, the *irrevocableness* of the divine promise, and the *solemnity* of the divine oath, are all engaged to secure their happiness and raise their joy.

Would the reader be more fully persuaded that the royal prophet was dead to the law? let him read the description which David gives of the blessed man, and consider his words. No man can, with propriety, be called *blessed*, but he who is in a pardoned state and accepted of God; and this the Psalmist intimates. For till his sins be pardoned and his person accepted, he is under a curse, and obnoxious to wrath. How, then, does that experienced saint and infallible author describe the blessed man? and to what does he ascribe his justification? To a *personal* or an *imputed* righteousness? Does he attain this blessed and happy state, does he enjoy this great and precious privilege in consequence of keeping the law, or because he has performed a sincere, though imperfect obedience? No such thought was conceived in the Psalmist's mind; no such thing drops from his pen. His words are, "blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. The blessed man is here described as one who is in himself a *polluted* sinner; an *insolvent* debtor; and deeply pressed in his conscience with the *weight* of his guilt.\* And his blessedness arises, not from his own duties, or his well-meant endeavors to keep the law, but from the *pardon*ing love of God, the *purifying* blood of Jesus and the *sanctifying* operations of the Holy Spirit. His blessedness consists in being *cleansed* from his loathsome defilement, the *non-imputation* of his enormous debt, the *removal* of his intolerable burden, and the *renewal* of a right spirit within him. The last of which particulars is not the cause or

condition of the former, but an evidence of their being enjoyed.

The observation which Paul makes on this evangelical and comfortable text, is full to our purpose. He informs us that the design of David in these words is, to "describe the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8. Righteousness *imputed*—righteousness *without works*! An odd kind of phrases in the account of many. Uncouth and mysterious to all who are alive to the law, and seeking justification by it; but quite intelligible and highly comforting to such as are *dead* to the law; to such who believe in Jesus, as the "justifier of the ungodly," and venerate his charming name, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." To such persons the phrases are replete with marrow and fatness. Such divine declarations feast their very souls. For they are the words of grace and the language of love. By them, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, their anxious inquiries about acceptance with the eternal Sovereign are satisfied. Being conscious that they have no righteousness of their own, and equally certain that without a perfect obedience to the divine law they cannot be justified, they must have sunk in despair, if such a provision had not been made by sovereign grace; if such a righteousness had not been performed by their wonderful Substitute, as that which is here designed. But a righteousness without *works*; having no dependence upon, being entirely detached from, their own duties of every kind; being complete in itself, and intended for their use; *this* is the righteousness they want: a righteousness *imputed*. Being performed for them by Jesus, as their representative, and placed to their account by a gracious God, this brings it near to their souls, makes it warrantable for them to call it their own, and glory in it.

Let us once more attend to the dictates, and consider the conduct of Paul, in reference to this affair. That he was "dead to the law," those important words which contain the subject of this essay, expressly assert. That he had no expectation of life and happiness from his own obedience to it; and that his whole hope was resolved into the sovereign grace of God and the perfect work of Christ; are things extremely evident from all his invaluable writings. A few of those passages in which these fundamental truths are either expressly asserted or strongly implied, shall now be considered.

In his controversial epistle to the deceived Galatians, he forms a striking contrast between the *works* of the law and *faith* in Jesus. Thrice he mentions the *works of the law*, and thrice he excludes them from hav-

\* The three terms used in the text to express the pardoning mercy of God, give us three ideas of sin, to set forth, in a more affecting view, its various malignity; and at the same time to represent, in a more striking light, the complicated wretchedness of that man whose sins are not forgiven, and to show the superior excellence of a free pardon.

ing any, the least concern in our justification. With equal frequency he mentions the *faith of Christ*, and as often asserts that we are justified by it.\* These are his words: "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Gal. ii. 15, 16. *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles—we, who are the children of Abraham, and the peculiar people of God—to whom the sacred oracles were committed, who have the ordinances of divine worship, and whose situation in all respects is greatly superior to that of the ignorant, profligate, idolatrous Gentiles—we, who possess so many advantages, in comparison with the benighted heathen, and, were such a thing practicable, have all the encouragement which any person could have, to expect justification by our own obedience; yet we have renounced every hope of that kind; well knowing that a man, whether Jew or Gentile, is not justified by the works of the law; being fully persuaded that he is not accepted of God on account of any works which he has done, by any assistance whatever, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; by relying on him as the end of the law for righteousness, and believing on him as the justifier of the ungodly.* Rom. x. 4, iv. 5. *Even we, possessing such a conviction, and acting under such a persuasion, have believed in Jesus Christ; have renounced our own righteousness, as being absolutely insufficient, and betaken ourselves to the Lord Messiah, under the humbling character of guilty, helpless, perishing sinners; and with this professed design, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law—that our sins might be pardoned, and our persons accepted, in this truly evangelical way; no longer desiring, nor any more attempting to seek these superlative blessings by the works of the law, whether they be moral or ceremonial. And good reason we have to drop every such pursuit—for God himself has declared, and it stands on everlasting record, to confound every proud attempt to establish our own obedience; that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.* So that whether we regard the divine declaration recorded by the Psalmist, Psalm cxliii. 2, or whether we advert to the manifold imperfections attending our best performances, we are

fully assured that we never shall, that we never can be justified by them. Such is the purport of this apostolic testimony.

In this instructive text the zealous apostle states, asserts, and defends the truth for which we plead, in the most emphatical and reiterated manner. This one passage, therefore if considered in connection with the scope and design of the whole epistle, and the state of the Galatian churches at the time in which it was written and addressed to them, may be justly esteemed a decisive proof of the point. A decisive proof that no man ever was accepted of God, that no man ever can be justified before him, by any holiness of which he is the subject, or on account of any works which he has performed; and, consequently that every true believer is "dead to the law."

The views of a man who is alive to the law, and the hope of one who is dead to it, are finely described by the same infallible author, in his consolatory and instructive letter to the church at Philippi. These things he illustrates in his own experience and conduct. The support of his hope, and the views which he had before conversion, he compares with what he after enjoyed. While alive to the law, and before conversion, the privileges of his birth, as a son of the renowned Abraham, and his circumcision according to the divine command; the zeal which he had for the traditions of his fathers, and the strictness of his profession as a pharisee; his punctual performance of ceremonial institutions, his unblameable conduct in the sight of men, and his sincere obedience to the moral law; were the things which he counted his greatest gain, as constituting the foundation of his hope of eternal life. These were the ground of his self-righteous confidence, and the fuel of his pharisaical pride. And if trusting in these things had been lawful or safe for any man, no one had greater advantages or a fairer pretence than Saul the pharisee had. Philip. iii. 4.

But when apprehended by omnipotent grace, Phil. iii. 12, and dead to the law, he builds on another foundation, and speaks a very different language. Then he declares that all those things which he once accounted his highest gain, he now esteems not only mean, in comparison with Christ, but loss itself. With an air of great solemnity, and as going to utter a truth of the last importance, he adds, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him; not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of

\* That is, not by the principle, or the exercise of faith, but by the object of it; which is Christ and his righteousness.



Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Philip. iii. 8, 9.

Let us briefly consider the several clauses of this remarkable text. *Yea, doubtless*—I affirm it without the least hesitation, and am determined to abide it. That I count **ALL THINGS**, whether they be birth-privileges or pharisaical zeal, ceremonial rites or moral duties—these, *all these*, notwithstanding their splendid appearance to an eye tinctured with Jewish prejudices, I count *but loss*. Yea, I do not only thus repudiate all my privileges, and all my performances before conversion, but all my apostolic gifts, and all my Christian graces; all that I have and all that I do, I esteem of no avail in the grand article of justification. These things, though abundantly useful and highly excellent, when standing in their proper places, and referred to suitable ends, are little, are nothing, are loss itself, compared with *the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*. Such is the love I bear to my Saviour, and such the esteem I have for his righteousness, that for his sake *I have gladly suffered the loss of all things* which I once so highly prized. And however strange it may appear to a mind leavened with legal pride, I again declare that I *count them* despicable as the sordid scraps which are thrown to the dogs, and loathsome as *dung*, which is cast out of sight. Such is the amount of my performances, and such my estimate of them, if set in competition with Jesus, and presuming to stand in the place of his righteousness. It is, therefore, now my principal desire and supreme concern *that I may win Christ*, as quite sufficient to supply all my wants, and render me completely and eternally happy. That so, when the Judge ascends the throne, and wrath makes inquisition for blood—when none but the perfectly righteous shall be able to stand, I *may be found in him*, the Beloved. Eph. i 6. For, being thus found, my acceptance is certain, my salvation is sure. *Not having*, not depending upon or pleading *mine own righteousness, which is of the law*; my inherent holiness with which I am endued as a Christian, and those righteous acts I have been enabled to perform, in compliance with the sacred precepts, and with a view to the glory of God; *but* being adorned with, and depending upon *that glorious obedience which is through the faith of Christ*; which was finished by him, is revealed in the gospel, and received by faith. Even that obedience which, to denote its absolute perfection and the manner in which the sinner enjoys it to his comfort, is called **THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD BY FAITH**. Thus Gamaliel's pupil, thus the apostle of Christ delivers his faith, and describes the foundation of his hope of future acceptance. And

this declaration he made on purpose to guard the Philippian converts against the subtle attacks of Judaizing teachers, Philip. iii. 1, 2, who strenuously contended that something more was necessary to justification, than the righteousness of the divine Redeemer, and a reliance upon it—which consideration renders the argument from this passage the more strongly conclusive in proof of the point in hand.

Let us hear another infallible teacher and faithful follower of the Lamb, when delivering not his own private sentiments but the faith of the church, and in the name of all the apostles. A controversy being raised about the necessity of circumcision in order to salvation, which was carried on by the Jewish zealots with no small degree of warmth, and not without much disturbance to the peace of believers; and the apostles and elders being convened at Jerusalem to consider the unhappy affair, Peter, after mentioning various things, concludes with a short but comprehensive declaration of his own faith, and the faith of the church in general. Let us attentively hear his words, and diligently consider their import. For he speaks by the Holy Ghost, and delivers the mind of Christ. He speaks on a weighty occasion, and to determine an important controversy. The controversy in fact was, *whether Jesus only should have the glory of the sinner's salvation, or whether human endeavors and human worthiness ought not to share it with him?* Thus the contest lay between the grace of God and the pride of man; and thus it still continues, however the terms of the question may be varied, or whatever disguises may be put on it.

The decision given to this controversy in those times, and what will be always valid, is contained in the following words: "BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THROUGH THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WE SHALL BE SAVED." Acts xv. 11. Salvation is that all-comprehensive blessing which the awakened sinner wants. Let this be granted, and his desires are satisfied; he can have no more. For it includes a complete deliverance from every evil, and the full enjoyment of every good. Now this infinitely glorious blessing is expressly said to be *by grace*—and grace is *free favor*. In the sacred writings it is directly opposed to all works and worthiness. Nor can it be otherwise. For where works and worthiness come into consideration, there the province of grace ceases.\* When, therefore, it is affirmed by the oracle of heaven, that we are *saved by grace*, we are led to conclude, that our own duties, however sincere or

\* Gratia non erit gratia ullo modo, nisi sit gratuita omnino modo. Acta Synod. Dorærech. Par. III. p. 211.

however diversified, have no part in the wonderful work. But that *favor, free, sovereign* favor, is all in all. The foundation of the spiritual temple, and of our eternal happiness, was laid in the riches of grace. The stones are polished, and the superstructure is reared by the hand of omnipotent grace. And when the last stone in the magnificent edifice shall be laid, it will be with shoutings, "GRACE! GRACE unto it!" Zech. iv. 7. It was free, sovereign grace which distinguished the vessels of mercy, in the eternal decree of election. The reason why they were chosen rather than others, is to be resolved, not into any difference there was originally between them and those who finally perish, nor into any good works foreseen, but into the sovereign will of him who says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."\* The same grace was concerned in the constitution of the everlasting covenant of peace, which was made with Christ, as the head of the chosen seed, and treasuring up all spiritual blessings in him, on their behalf. Eph. i. 3. 1 Tim. i. 9. Our redemption by his blood, our regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and final felicity, all spring from the same infinite source, and are all ascribed, in the volume of inspiration, to the same original and glorious cause.

And as Christ is the great trustee of the covenant of grace, and the grand repository, of all the blessings of grace, so infinite grace is manifested in him in such a manner as to reflect a glory on all the perfections of Deity, as well as to secure salvation to all its objects. And as it was an act of unutterable condescension, and an evidence of boundless love in the Son of God, to undertake the arduous work, and become incarnate that he might accomplish it, so we are, with the greatest propriety, said to be saved by *his grace*; as in the text under consideration—"we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." *We believe*—we are fully

persuaded, and rest in it as a certain, sacred, and most comfortable truth—that though our state be extremely miserable, and our persons absolutely unworthy; though we have forfeited every blessing, and deserve every curse; yet, *through the grace*, the unmerited favor and boundless benignity of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved. He being a person of infinite dignity, has performed a work of infinite value, in virtue of which we shall be completely saved: saved, while here, from the curse of the law and the dominion of Satan; saved hereafter, from the being of sin and the damnation of hell—so perfectly saved as to fear no evil; so perfectly blessed as to want no good. Such a salvation did grace provide; such a salvation does Christ perform.

In this truly apostolical creed, which was delivered by Peter and recorded by Luke, the grace of God, and the work of our Lord, are all in all. And as it ascribes our whole salvation to the undertaking of Jesus, so it secures the whole glory to his adorable name. The avowed belief and the comfortable hope of the primitive Christians being contained in it, we have a striking instance, and an irrefragable proof, that they were dead to the law; that the peace of their minds in time, and their hopes of bliss in eternity, did not arise from their own obedience, but from that revelation of divine grace which is made in the gospel—that sovereign grace which richly provided every blessing, and freely furnishes every requisite, necessary to everlasting bliss.

Having considered this apostolical confession of faith, as it is preserved for our instruction in the most authentic history of the primitive Christian church, let us once more advert to the writings of Paul. We have already heard him declare that he was "dead to the law." We have also heard him loudly proclaim the excellence of that righteousness by which he was justified, and in which he desired to be found; and seen him carefully describe the found-

\* Rom. ix. 15. The doctrine of *sovereign distinguishing grace*, it must be acknowledged, is too generally exploded as a fiction. It is now discarded, as not fitted to gain the assent of the free inquirer, in so enlightened and polite an age as the present. The opposers of it generally plead its supposed *inconsistency* with the ideas we naturally have of the perfections of the Supreme Being. But the reason, the *true* reason is its inconsistency with the *pride* of man, and the opinion of *human worthiness*, which so generally prevail. And here, it must be owned, there is an entire and eternal repugnancy. *That* being cordially received, *these* must fall to the ground, as *Dagon* before the ark. Hence it is that we are naturally so loth to embrace this humbling truth. Yea, some there are who freely confess that salvation is by Christ only, and through his imputed righteousness, who are not easily brought to admit the doctrine of eternal, personal, and unconditional election into their creed. And, though their *experience* may plead for it, though their other *avowed sentiments* may involve it—yet they dispute against it, as commonly and justly stated by Calvinists, and endeavor to load it with horrid consequences. This the writer of these pages knows by ex-

perience, to his grief and shame. Through the ignorance of his mind, the pride of his heart, and the prejudices of his education; he, in his younger years, often opposed it with much warmth, though with no small degree of weakness. But, after an impartial inquiry, and many prayers, he found reason to alter his judgment. He found it to be the doctrine of the Bible, and a dictate of the unerring Spirit. Being thus patronized, he received the once obnoxious sentiment under a full conviction of its being a divine truth. And now he considers the eternal, discriminating love of God, in the choice of his people, as the original source of all those spiritual blessings they here enjoy; of all that glory they hereafter expect. To the *distinguishing* love of the Father, to the *redeeming* blood of the Son; to the *almighty* agency and sanctifying operations of the Divine Spirit, he now desires to ascribe the unrivalled honor of a complete, eternal salvation. In the firm belief of this glorious and comprehensive truth, he desires to *live*; enjoying the sweet consolations arising from it, he desires to *die*. And if the Lord thus favor him, he does not fear but his life will be *useful*, in some degree—his death *peaceful*, and his end *salvation*.



dation on which the most guilty may safely rest the weight of their immortal concerns. Let us now observe him bitterly lamenting over his unhappy brethren after the flesh. These are his affecting words, which are introduced with a solemn appeal to heaven, "*I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*" To which he adds, "my hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Rom. ix. 2, 3, x. 1. What was the cause of this insupportable grief? Were they scandalous in their lives, and atrociously wicked? Had they renounced the worship of God and sunk into practical atheism? Far from it. The persons over whom he laments, had a "zeal of God," and earnestly "followed after righteousness;" were sincere in their profession, and diligent in the pursuit of eternal happiness. Of this Paul was a witness, and this he openly testifies. Rom. x. 2, ix. 31. In what, then, did their fatal mistake consist? For the popular maxim, and the reason on which it is founded, are, "Be sincere. Perform every duty to the utmost of your power and the best of your knowledge, and you shall obtain the favor of God and the fruition of heaven. For it cannot be supposed that where the heart is *sincere* in the worship of God, and the conduct *regular* in the sight of men, a person's state can be bad, whatever may be his doctrinal sentiments." Such is the voice of general opinion, but not of divine revelation. For if this maxim were founded in truth, there would have been no occasion for the apostle's heartfelt sorrow over those of his brethren he here mentions. If, therefore, we would pay a due deference to the judgment of Paul, as an infallible guide, and credit the account which he gives of his kinsmen, and his sorrow for them, we must conclude that the maxim is false, and the reason on which it is founded, a dangerous mistake. And consequently, supposing a man to act in perfect conformity to it, his state might yet be extremely awful, and his end eternally miserable.

The Jews, over whom the compassionate apostle wept, were alive to the law, and seeking justification by it. Though sincere in a religious profession, and punctual in their attendance on divine institutions, they were utterly ignorant of the gospel, and despisers of the great Redeemer. That "sure foundation" which Jehovah had laid in Zion for the salvation of his people, was rejected by them as insufficient, and became to them "a rock of offence." Rom. ix. 33. They "followed after the law of righteousness," with sincerity and zeal; but its terms were too high, and its conditions too hard for them to perform, so that they could not

attain justification by it. For they sought that capital blessing, not by faith in their promised Messiah, "but as it were by the works of the law." Rom. ix. 31, 32. They "had a zeal of God," and a concern for his worship; but not according to "knowledge," as their conduct plainly showed. "For they being ignorant of God's "righteousness"—of the perfect purity of his nature, and the extensive demands of his law, "and going about," or seeking by every likely expedient, "to establish their own righteousness," as the condition of life—"have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Such was the unwarrantable opinion they had of their own imperfect duties, and so great was the pride of their hearts, that they would not accept of that complete righteousness which was appointed of God and provided by him; even that righteousness which is able to justify in the most desperate cases, and in which their offended Maker is well pleased. Isa. xlii. 21. Would we know more particularly what obedience it is that deserves the glorious character? The apostle informs us: "For Christ is the end of the law." All that it requires, he performed; all that it threatens, he underwent. And this, all this was done and suffered, not merely to set us an example, but "for righteousness;" a real, perfect righteousness. As such it is accounted by the law, and accepted by the Lawgiver. Nor was it designed for the benefit of him who performed it; but it was designed for sinners, and is freely imputed "to every one that believeth," without any respect of persons, or any regard to worthiness. Rom. x. 3, 4.

To this matchless obedience, the self-righteous Jews would not submit. Being ignorant of their real state, and in the warm pursuit of acceptance with the infinite Sovereign, by their own duties, they were unwilling to admit the thought of being indebted to grace, or beholden to such an assistance. To look for justification by the righteousness of one whom their rulers had agreed to execrate, and condemned as worthy of death; to expect salvation through believing in one who, loaded with infamy and racked with torture, expired on a cross; this they esteemed highly absurd. A salvation by such unpromising means, and granted in such a singular way, as left no room for their splendid duties to make a figure and shine conspicuous, as co-partners in the affair; such a salvation they would not accept—they thought themselves warranted from their hearts to despise. Nor would they acknowledge that Jesus, the crucified, was their promised Messiah; though the time in which he appeared, the doctrines he taught, and the works which he did, all attested his divine mission, and

afforded the brightest evidence in support of his claim to the character. Thus they rejected his person, doctrine, and work. And as ignorance of the holiness of God, the purity of his law and the evil of sin, laid a foundation for that proud opinion they entertained of the excellence of their own duties, and as that issued in their rejection of the Lord's Messiah, so the same ignorance and pride cause the generality now to reject his imputed righteousness, as an unnecessary thing; even when they do not proceed to that daring infidelity which pours open contempt on his person and character. Hence we may safely conclude, that all the supine negligence about eternal things which appears in the world, and all that disregard which is shown to Christ and his work, where the gospel revelation shines, proceeds from *ignorance*—ignorance of the *evil* of sin, and the *righteousness* of God in his law.

And now, reader, are you "dead to the law?" Are all your expectations and all your desires of justification by it extinct? Remember, it is one thing to acknowledge a truth in theory, and another to live under its practical influence. Many there are who have learned, in a doctrinal way that believers are dead to the law, who yet, in the *dispositions* of their hearts and in their own *experience*, were never divorced from it. Their legal apprehensions and slavish fears, their mercenary views in the performance of duty, and their self-elating thoughts, when they imagine they have performed it well, are evidences that they cleave to the law. These, when habitual, are a convincing proof that they are alive to it, that they are still, in a partial way, seeking their peace and happiness from their own obedience.\*

Again: What think you of the Redeemer's righteousness? Have you a superlative esteem for it, and is it with you the "one thing needful?" Do you repose your confidence in that only, for acceptance, and venture your all for eternity, on that single

bottom? Is that your plea at the throne of grace; and is it your ardent desire to be found in it when standing at the great tribunal? There, reader, you must shortly stand, before a Judge whose eyes are "as a flame of fire," and with whom "is terrible majesty." Examine, therefore, the state of your soul, and cultivate an acquaintance with Jesus Christ. The fruits of an increasing acquaintance with him, are truly desirable and unspeakably precious. For the more you behold of his personal glories and perfect obedience, the less will you be inclined to cleave to the law, or depend on your own defective duties. This is a certain truth, and confirmed by all Christian experience. For though you will not be inclined to reject the law as a rule of conduct, or to neglect duty as an evidence of your cordial submission to divine authority, and of gratitude for benefits received and blessings expected, yet you will have a meaner opinion of all that you do, and a stronger confidence in the work of your Saviour. Besides, the peace you enjoy will be steadier, and the works you perform will be more spiritual. Your peace will be *steadier*: for the more clearly you see the dignity of him who made your peace, the greater will the worth of that work appear by which it was made. Consequently your dependence upon it will be more firm; your rejoicing in it will be more constant. Your duties will be *more spiritual*: for in proportion as your views of the infinite all-sufficiency of the divine Mediator increase, so will your love to him. "Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." And as the love of God is the principle of all acceptable obedience, in proportion as that generous principle is more lively and active, duty will be performed with greater delight and diligence, and it will also be more certainly referred to its proper end, the glory of the ever blessed God.

Yes, believer, in such a procedure you

\* Here it may be proper to observe, that the real believer, even after a long experience in the ways of God, is too ready to look to his own frames and duties for that peace and comfort which nothing but the blood of Christ and the testimony of the Spirit can possibly give. A legal bias of mind is so natural to us, and our views of the Saviour and his glorious righteousness are, at the best, so contracted, that we often lose sight of the excellent object before we are aware. The candid reader and experienced Christian will not be offended if I here introduce a paragraph extracted from the life of a minister of the gospel in the last century; as it may, in some degree, both illustrate and confirm this observation. The minister to whom I refer, was Mr. Owen Stockton, a part of whose experience is contained in the following words: "I find that though in my *judgment* and *profession* I acknowledge Christ to be my righteousness and peace, yet upon examination I observe that my *heart* hath done quite another thing; and that secretly I have gone about to establish my own righteousness, and have derived my comfort and peace from my *own* *actings*. For when I have been disquieted by the acting of my sins, that which hath recovered me to my former peace hath not been

that I could find God speaking peace through the *blood* of Christ, but rather from the *intermission* of temptation, and the *cessation* of those sins. When I have been troubled at an evil frame of heart, I do not find that the *righteousness* of Christ hath been my consolation; but that which has relieved me, as far as I can find, was, that afterwards I have found myself in a *better temper*. Having been in trouble and perplexity, I have read the scripture, gone to prayer, and in doing these I have been relieved; yet I do not find that at such times I had a real, true, living communion with God in such duties, or that the Spirit of God did, in those duties, reveal to me my interest in Christ, and so quiet my conscience. Hence I come to see what great need I have, and that it is of singular use to watch over my soul in all its ways, both in reference to sin, that I *fall* not into it; and when fallen what the *carriage* and *actings* of my soul are at such a time; whether I flee for relief to God in Christ or to my own works. For as Satan keeps some alienated from God by the gross pollutions of the world, so others from Christ, by their establishing a righteousness of their own. O, Lord! break thou this snare for me." In *Beart's Etern. Law and Evcr. Gosp.* Part. I. Pref. p. 15, 16.



will find your spiritual account, and grace shall have the glory. Faith will grow firm as the deep-rooted cedar, Col. ii. 7. Eph. iii. 17, and hope bright as the day. Love will expand the heart, and holiness blossom as the rose. The life will be vocal to the Redeemer's praise, and death even *death* itself, peaceful in his soft embrace.

"Reveal blessed Jesus! reveal thy glory to mine eye, and shed abroad thy love in my heart. Cause me to rest completely satisfied in thy undertaking, as the fulfilling end of the law, and enable me to live upon thy inexhaustable fulness. Empty me of every self-dependence, and make me truly humble. Show me the beauty of holiness, as delineated in thy most perfect pattern; and help me to copy it in my own conduct. Raise my affections to heavenly things, and grant me the abiding earnest of my eternal inheritance. Then, though in a sinful world and a militant state, though harassed with bodily pain, or pinched with worldly poverty, I shall not only be safe but happy. The slavish fears of damnation shall be far distant, and the beams of celestial joy shall shine into my soul. Then, ye sons of sensuality and children of pride, ye may take your sordid pleasures and boast of your tinsel honors. I shall neither covet your lawless mirth, nor envy your sounding titles. Being dead to the law and alive to my God, being safe in the hands of my Saviour, and blest with a sense of his love, having death in remembrance, and heaven in view, I despise your mean pursuits, and abhor your illicit enjoyments. While the world are satisfied with the feather of fading honors, and the froth of perishing pleasures, be it thy concern, O, my soul! to glorify him who died for thee and rose again. Then shall substantial pleasures be thy present enjoyment, and unfading honors thy eternal crown."

#### SECTION IV.

##### *Of the law, as dead to believers.*

HAVING shown that believers are dead to the law, we shall now consider the law as dead to them.

Whoever is dead to the law as a covenant, the law, under that consideration, is dead to him. As the relation is mutual, while it subsists at all, so is the death. Considered as the offspring of Adam, we are born under the law, as a covenant; we look to it for life, and continue in that situation while unregenerate. But when the Spirit of God enlightens the mind to discern our state, and awakens the conscience to apprehend our danger, all our expecta-

tions of life by our own obedience being blasted, and having fled to Jesus Christ as "the end of the law," and taken shelter under another covenant, we are no longer under it, as prescribing the condition of life, nor any more liable to its awful curse. It is *dead*, and our deliverance from it is complete and glorious.

This comfortable truth we are taught, by the pen of inspiration, in the epistle of Paul to the Romans. Thus we read—"Know ye not brethren (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as it liveth.\* For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by law to her husband, so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held." Rom. vii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6. On this remarkable passage we may observe that the divine law, by a usual figure of speech, is described as a person. It is compared to a husband, to whom some are *married*, and to whom others are *dead*. To the law, in its covenant form, men naturally cleave, as a wife to her husband. They look to it for life, and on it they depend for salvation. Their hopes of happiness and fears of misery rise and fall in exact proportion to that obedience which they suppose themselves to perform, in conformity to its commands, or the consciousness they have of their disobedience to it. Such expectations and fears prove that *they* are alive to it; and that implies that *it* is alive to them. And while alive to them, it has dominion over them.

This dominion of the law is absolute. It extends to all the powers of the mind, and all the members of the body; to all the imaginations of the heart, and all their effects in the life; and it requires, on the dreadful peril of incurring its severest displeasure, and suffering its heaviest curse, that all these in every instance, and perpetually, should perfectly correspond with its righteous demands. This the apostle illustrates in the following manner: "For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he liveth."

\* That the apostle here designs the *law*, not the *man*, has been observed by many. And so understood, it seems much better to agree with the following illustration, and with the scope of the place in general.

In like manner, all who are alive to the law, and married to it, are bound to obey it in all things, so long as it lives. Nothing but death can dissolve the obligation. Either the law, as a husband, must *die* to the sinner, or the sinner, as wedded to the law, must *die* to all expectations of justification by it, before he can be loosed from its commands, as prescribing the condition of life, or be freed from its tremendous threatenings. And that this twofold death takes place, as to the law and the regenerate man, the unerring writer proceeds to assert: "But if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." As that relation on which the law of marriage was founded, is entirely dissolved and extinct by the husband's death, so the law itself must unavoidably and absolutely cease, together with all its consequences. And as the wife has no further expectations of assistance from him, he being dead, so she has no longer any fear of incurring his displeasure. And being thus set free from her former husband, she is entirely at liberty to "marry another man," without being chargeable with the crime of adultery.

Now the apostle proceeds to apply the comparison. *Wherefore, my brethren*, just such is your case. The law, as a husband, was once alive, and had dominion over you, but now it is dead. *Ye also* were once alive to the law, but *are now become dead to it*. Having seen its infinite purity, and felt its killing power, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, ye were obliged to acknowledge that ye could not be justified by it. Forced, though reluctant, ye quitted your self-righteous hopes. But, having heard the glorious gospel, and being enabled, by the sacred Spirit, to behold *the body of Christ*, that body which the Son of God assumed when he condescended to be made under the law: and viewing the glory of that obedience which he wrought out, and the greatness of those sufferings which he underwent in that immaculate body, to satisfy the law and justify sinners; with the utmost readiness ye renounced your own righteousness. Having found Jesus, the pearl of great price, and in him all that you want, ye freely relinquished your former pleas. Thus ye became dead to the law, *that ye should be married to another* and a better husband; *even to him who* died on the cross to atone for your sins, and *is raised from the dead* to present you complete. Yes, my brethren, that adorable Person is now become the object of your strongest affection and your chaste regards. To him ye look for every assistance; on him ye depend for all your salvation. This being our happy case, *we are now delivered from the law*. Its dominion over us is entirely ceased. It has no more authority to demand obedience

from us, more or less, as the condition of life; or to denounce a curse upon us for disobedience. Nor can it be otherwise with us, as believers, or with the law as a covenant. For the inspired author adds, as a reason of his former assertion, *that being dead wherein we were held*. We were bound by the law to sinless obedience. That was the least it required. And for non-performance it *held* us accursed. Thus we were held by it and under it. But now it is *dead*. The obligation we were under to perfect, personal obedience, as the condition of life, is therefore cancelled. Nor are we any longer obnoxious to its penal sanction; for we "are not under the law, but under grace." Happy deliverance! Wonderful change! Such is the purport of this important paragraph.

Nor has the law, as a covenant, the least room to complain; for this way of deliverance from its high demands and awful sanction, is as equitable in itself as it is comfortable to the believer. Its precepts were not given, nor its curse denounced in vain. For though the chosen of God were utterly unable to perform the one or suffer the other, in their own persons, yet, in their *Head Representative*, and *Surely*, its precepts were inviolably kept, and on him its curse was fully executed. It was entirely on their behalf that the Eternal Word became incarnate. It was in their name and in their stead that he obeyed the commands of the law, and suffered its penalty. And all this being according to the eternal compact, in the counsels of heaven, and to manifest the riches of divine grace in the salvation of the guilty, it is imputed to them, they are invested with it. Theirs it was, in the design of God, before they had a being, or time began; which secured from final condemnation. Theirs it is, in the happy enjoyment, when dead to the law, which frees them from slavish fears, which produces in them a holy liberty and heavenly joy. Theirs it is to justify and save; to render complete in the eye of the law, and eternally blessed in the fruition of God.

While sinners are alive to the law, and the law has dominion over them, its requisitions are high and its language is terrible; for "whatsoever things the law," as a covenant, "saith, it saith to them that are under the law." But, when dead to it, and when they commence believers, it addresses them in a milder tone, and with sweeter accents. Viewing them in Jesus Christ, their exalted head, its pacific language is, "I own myself entirely fulfilled; I acknowledged myself completely satisfied. True it is, my nature is not in the least altered; my requirements are not at all abated; my end, as *commanding*, is still a perfect righteous-



ness; Rom. x. 4, my end, as *violated*, is still extreme punishment. Gal. iii. 10. I cannot but require perfect love to God, perfect love to man, and perfect holiness, both in heart and life. Never abating the least title of these demands, I denounce the curse on every offender, and on the least departure from absolute perfection. But here believers, is your safety, and this is your comfort, that my precepts have been fully obeyed by Jesus, your substitute. This obedience I consider as far superior to the spotless innocence of your first father, while in the bowers of paradise, or the sanctity of angels in the glory of heaven. It is possessed of infinite worth, and by it I am highly magnified. Isa. xlii. 21. This is your comfort, believers, that the curse due to your sins has been executed on your most holy Surety; and his sufferings were more than tantamount to your eternal misery. And as he performed that matchless obedience, and underwent those unparalleled sufferings, in your nature, and professedly in your stead, I am thoroughly satisfied, and you are completely justified. Now, though I cannot dispense with the least fault, or connive at any infirmity, yet I behold all your faults laid on Immanuel; I behold all his righteousness put upon you; and on his account I acquit you from guilt: I accept you as righteous, and pronounce you worthy of eternal life. Hail, ye highly favored of the Lord! Ye are wise; ye are safe; ye are happy! My Author and your God has pronounced you *blessed*; and shall I seek to reverse it? Your Redeemer has *died*, your Redeemer is *risen*; and shall I dispute whether satisfaction was made? *How shall I curse whom the Lord hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?*" Such is the language of the divine law to him that believes in the Lord Redeemer; and in this, justice herself acquiesces, while both agree to expedite and ascertain his eternal salvation.\*

What reason, then, has the believer to rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory?" To rejoice, not in himself, but in the LORD HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Joy in the Lord is his exalted privilege, Philip. iv. 4, and thankfulness to God should be his constant business. For in the Redeemer's obedience he is not only pardoned and freed from punishment, but is also the object of divine complacency. Though in himself loathsome with impurity, and foul as the dung-hill, laden with guilt and obnoxious to ruin, yet, being interested in this most excellent righteousness, and vested with this most beautiful robe, he is pronounced righteous by infinite justice, and declared absolutely

fair in the eye of Omniscience. Numb. xxiii. 21. Jer. l. 20. Cant. iv. 7. Eph. v. 27. Col. i. 22. While alive to the law, the righteousness in which he trusted was but "filthy rags." It could neither procure pardon for his sins, nor peace for his conscience; neither adorn him for the glory of heaven, nor screen him from the vengeance of hell. But this—being wrought, finished, and infinitely ennobled, by our incarnate God, this, O believer is all in all. By this you have pardon of sin, and peace with your Maker; are delivered from death, and entitled to glory. This renders you meet for the marriage supper of the Lamb, and in it you shall shine to all eternity.

And, lest any awakened sinner should complain—"though the righteousness be infinitely glorious, it is quite out of my reach," be it observed, that the righteousness itself, and all the blessings connected with it, are gifts of the *freest grace*. And they are all designed, not to distinguish merit, but to enrich the indigent and relieve the miserable. Come then, trembling sinner, seeing your poverty and feeling your misery, you have an indisputable right to rely on the righteousness and expect the blessings. The divine declaration excludes none, no, not the  *vilest*, that are willing to come to Jesus. John vi. 37. Matt. xi. 28. The most enormous crimes, and the greatest unworthiness, are no objection at all, on the part of the Saviour. Why, then, should they be a discouragement to you? Remember, awakened sinner, that it is GRACE to which you must apply for relief; and grace, in the very nature of things, has no concern but with the unworthy. Is it *salvation*, a *great salvation*, you want? Who then are the proper objects of such a favor? The holy? the righteous? those who can help themselves? No: but the guilty; the miserable; the damnable. These—let the desponding hear and rejoice! and let the mouth of proud infidelity be forever stopped—these are the proper objects of a *great*, a *free*, a *divine* salvation. On such, grace will be magnified. From such, Immanuel will have the glory which is due to his sacred and charming name, JESUS. May the Lord the Spirit, whose office it is to lead into all truth, and to glorify Christ, direct my reader's inquiries, and satisfy his doubts. May he *die* to the law and all self-righteous hopes. Then shall the law be *dead* to him; and, being married to the heavenly Bridegroom, interested in his person, and endowed with his riches, he shall "bring forth fruit unto God." Rom. vii. 4. His soul shall be peaceful, and his life useful. He shall be attended here with inviolable safety; hereafter he shall enjoy unutterable bliss.

\* Hervey's Letters to Wesley, pp. 134, 135.

## SECTION V.

*Believers dead to the law, that they might live to God.*

SOME, perhaps, may be ready thus to infer: "If believers are dead to the law, and the law be dead to them, they are quite at liberty to *live* as they please. They may sin without control from the law, and without any remorse of conscience. Their own obedience not being a condition of their pardon and justification, having no hand in procuring the favor of God, or the salvation of their souls; there is no occasion for it. They may launch out into licentiousness, and their state be equally safe, their end equally happy, as if they were diligent in the performance of duty, and strictly self-denying." In answer to such an ignorant cavil, and in confutation of such a false surmise, I shall only observe, that the great apostle has drawn a very *different* conclusion from the *same* premises. For he says, "I am dead to the law, that I might"—what? commit iniquity with greediness, and sin with impunity? By no means: but "that I might LIVE UNTO GOD."

The glory of God is the ultimate end of our existence itself, and of all we enjoy.\* All the dispensations of his providence, and all the blessings of grace, perfectly harmonize in accomplishing the grand design. But the blessings of grace, being much more glorious in themselves, more beneficial to us, and truly astonishing in the manner of their communication, are more fully adapted to answer that sacred purpose. In such a light the believer views them. As calculated to answer so high an end, he delights in them, and is thankful for them. And, as living to God is his duty, so he esteems it his privilege, and desires to make it his constant business.

The persons of whom we speak are said to *live*. They live, not only an animal and a rational, but also a spiritual life. This life they received from Christ. As it is written, "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead" in sin "shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." John v. 25. And as they received their life from him, so it is maintained by him. Its continuance, vigor, and exercise, depend on their union with him, and the

communications of grace from him. John xiv. 19. They live *by faith*. For thus saith the Lord, *the just*, the truly righteous, *shall live*; shall enjoy all their comfort and perform all their obedience *by faith*. Rom. i. 17. And that we might not be at a loss to determine what faith it is by which they live, the apostle informs us, when he says, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal. ii. 20. *I live by the faith* of him whose love to me was great, unparalleled, and absolutely inexpressible in any other way than by its amazing effects, in giving himself up, as a surety for me, to the stroke of justice and the death of the cross. It is from him, as my glorious Substitute, I derive my peace; it is on him, as absolutely complete, I depend for my all.

Again: They live—not to *themselves*, in the gratification of their sinful appetites—not to the *world*, in conforming to its corrupt customs, and seeking their happiness in it—but to *God*. As they live a life of *faith* on the adored Redeemer, which affords peace to their souls, so they live a life of *obedience* to their heavenly Father, which brings glory to his eternal name.

This obedience includes a real love to him, and a conscientious conformity to his commands. It includes a real *love* to him. The Christian loves God, as he is in himself, an infinitely *amiable* Being; and as he is to him, an infinitely *gracious* and beneficent Being. He who does not love the Lord, certainly cannot live to him. For we cannot be said, with propriety, to live to any particular person, or *for* any particular end, unless our affections be set on the person, and the bent of our desire be to attain the end. But as the sinner who is dead to the law, as the believer who is married to Jesus, beholds the glory of God in the person and work of the Saviour, so he cannot but love him with a supreme affection. The attributes of Deity shining through that wonderful medium, and the veil of ignorance and unbelief being removed, he bows before the infinite Majesty, and reveres his transcendent perfections, as thus displayed. In the great Immanuel they all appear, awfully glorious, yet supremely amiable. On the cross, as an amazing theatre, he beholds "mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace kissing each other." There he beholds *veracity* executing her severest threatenings with an impartial hand, and love performing her choicest promises with the greatest alacrity. *Justice* asserting her rights, and *mercy* dispensing her pardons. Tremendous *wrath* revealed, and sovereign *grace* exalted. It is here he learns the divine character—"THE JUST GOD AND THE SAVIOUR."

Beholding the condescension and love of

\* This capital truth is here taken for granted; but if the reader desire to see it demonstrated, he may receive satisfaction by a careful perusal of the late Mr. Jonathan Edwards's Dissertation, entitled *God's last End in the Creation of the World*; or by consulting Stapferi, *Institutiones Theol. Polem. Univers.* Tom. I. Cap. III. § 435—493. Tom. IV. Cap. XV. § 267. The latter of these performances, included in five octavo vols., is in my humble opinion a valuable work, though little known in this country.



the suffering Surety, and his amazing 'ransactions on the cross, he at once admires his person and confides in his work. He admires his person, as altogether lovely; he confides in his work, as absolutely complete. In Jesus he beholds the glory of the true God. This glory attracts his adoring regards, and commands the sincerest love. The more he sees of his God, the more he loves him. And it is his greatest concern that he does not love him with a more intense and steady affection. The burden of his soul frequently is, that he should be guilty of such ingratitude to that sublime and beneficent Being whose infinite excellencies deserve all possible love; whose boundless grace and immense liberality to an unworthy object, lay him under additional and eternal obligations to make a complete and everlasting surrender of his heart and his all to him. The love of God being shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit, he loves and adores his Maker, while the imperfections attending his warmest affection to his Father and his God, become the matter of his daily sorrow and penitential acknowledgment at the throne of grace. Now he sees the propriety of the apostolic maxim, "we love him because he first loved us." This divine flame being kindled in his breast, he begins to live to his God. The language of his heart is, "what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?"

That glorious grace which has laid so firm a foundation in the death of Christ for the peace of his conscience, and formed in his heart the noblest principle for producing a willing and acceptable obedience; teaches and enables him to yield a conscientious conformity to the divine commands. Being bought with a price, he now considers himself as the Lord's. The powers of his mind and the members of his body, the talents with which he is endued and the time with which he is indulged, all that he is and all that he has, he freely acknowledges belong to his God. As possessed of the powers of reason, and surrounded with the blessings of Providence, he discerns his obligations to his bountiful Creator and kind Preserver, in a much stronger light than before he was wont to do. His rational faculties, which he before debased to subserve inglorious designs in the service of Satan, he now desires to devote to his Maker. The favors of Providence, which he once abused to the gratification of abominable lusts, and prostituted to the vilest purposes, he now endeavors to improve to the honor of their liberal Donor. Being conscious that he is "less than the least of all the divine mercies," that it is free favor from which they all proceed, and that he is accountable to God for the use or abuse of them; he is careful to husband them well,

and to perform the part of a faithful steward in the use of his temporal enjoyments, that in so doing he may obtain the approbation of his Lord. Now the poor among the people of God, whom he once overlooked and despised, have his compassionate regards; and, according to his ability, receive relief from his hand. This he does for the sake, and in the name of his Divine Saviour; being well persuaded that he will consider it as done to himself. Matt. xxv. 35, 36. The cause of Christ and the interest of religion in general, he is ready to support in proportion to his capacities. Thoroughly persuaded that Jesus is the dearest of names, and his the best of causes, with cheerfulness he lends a helping hand, as Providence calls and duty requires. Being ennobled with that honor which comes from God, and an heir of eternal riches, he is not fond of worldly distinctions, nor covetous of transitory wealth. If he abound in temporal blessings, he considers himself as only intrusted with them by the great Lord of all, for more extensive usefulness. If, by a reverse in the course of Providence, he sink into poverty, he patiently bears it, knowing that he who gave the abundance has a right to take it away whenever he pleases. Believing the promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," he knows that "all things work together for his good." The Almighty is become a guarantee for his safety, and he confides in him. Jehovah is his portion, and he is satisfied with it. Thus he lives to God, in the enjoyment of providential favors, and in suffering afflictions, in proportion as faith and love are in exercise. But as the Christian's faith is too often like a "bruised reed," and his love like "the smoking flax," and as he finds "a law in his members, rebelling against the law of his mind," his imperfections in these, as in other instances of duty, are many and great; which imperfections are a sufficient cause of holy sorrow and penitential confessions before the Lord, every day of his life.

Further: He lives to God, and enjoys communion with him in the appointments of his house and the ordinances of divine worship. These holy institutions, while alive to the law, and unregenerate, were attended by him as dry duties and in a formal way. To behold the glory of Christ, and to feast upon his fulness, to have the presence of God, and rejoice in the light of his countenance, these were things he neither expected nor could desire. But now nothing short of this will satisfy his soul. He leaves the house of God and the exercises of the closet with a heavy heart, and goes mourning away, if he has not beheld his Beloved and had some degree of nearness to him. Psalms lxxiii. 1, 2, lxxiv. 1, 2.

Cant. v. 6. The gospel is a joyful sound in his ears, and a reviving cordial to his drooping spirits. On the unadulterated milk of the word he feeds with delight, and his very soul is refreshed by it. 1 Peter ii. 2.

Yet often, too often, alas! when engaged in divine worship, he finds that his thoughts wander, and his pious affections are dull; the corruptions of his heart work, and Satan attacks him with horrid suggestions; all which interrupt his communion with God, and fill his soul with grief. He is fully convinced, by repeated experience, that the best of his duties are defiled with sin, and utterly unworthy of divine acceptance. Yea, such is the sense which he has of their shameful defects, that sometimes he is tempted to think they are more likely to provoke the abhorrence than gain the approbation of Jehovah. Yet he does not, he cannot entirely omit them, even in those gloomy moments. Too apt he is to forget, in such unhappy seasons, that his services, as well as his person, are accepted only "in the Beloved." As our persons are abominably sinful, and our services extremely imperfect, if *those* be not cleansed by atoning blood, and *these* presented by the hand of the great Intercessor, there can be no acceptance for the one or the other. But if our persons be washed in that sacred fountain which was open for sin and uncleanness, if our duties be presented by the hand of our exalted High-priest, and perfumed with the incense of his mediation, Rev. viii. 3, 4, then the acceptance of both is certain. So that our acceptance with God in every view, both as to persons and services, is only in Christ, and for the sake of his work. It is in him as our head, and for the sake of that work which he finished on the cross, that our sins are pardoned and our persons accepted. It is through him, and in virtue of his intercession, that our most righteous performances meet with the least approbation from a holy God. These are the ground of the believer's confidence, both as to the safety of his state, and the acceptance of his duties.

The Christian, having a feeling and an abiding sense that such are his imperfections, frequently confesses them at the throne of grace, and on their account is deeply humbled. But, though humbled in the dust for them, he does not despair. For, being dead to the law, he looks to Jesus his heavenly Bridegroom; and, having a fresh application of atoning blood to his conscience, he is delivered from slavish fear, and strengthened for future duty. As a guilty creature, he comes again and again to the sacred, sanctifying stream, which flowed from the wounds of a crucified Saviour, and in this way he maintains peace in

his mind. As insufficient to perform any duty, to subdue any corruption, or to resist any temptation, he earnestly seeks the aids of the Spirit. Thus the blood of the cross and the Spirit of Christ enable him to live near to God, as completely justified, to the honor of God, as partly sanctified.

Nor is the believer satisfied with paying a due regard to the public appointments of religion, and living to God in attending upon them. His desire is, to cultivate a correspondence with his heavenly Father, in the family and in the closet, at all times and in all places. Conscious that he is ever under the eye of Omniscience, and always in the presence of him who searches the heart, he pays a particular regard to the inward frame of his mind; nor does he observe, without real grief, the most secret workings of inbred corruption. For he knows that the least deviation from the holy law is a sin; that the least sin is abhorred by Infinite Purity, and absolutely inexpressible by any atonement but that which was made by the great Messiah. His habitual desire, therefore, is to avoid sin, as the greatest of evils, and to follow after holiness, as the most desirable thing. He does not think it sufficient to be free from scandalous vices, or to abstain from such things as would injure his religious character among his fellow-professors; his elevated aim is, so to live to God, and so to walk with him here, as shall bear the nearest resemblance to the business and the bliss of the saints in light, that the present imperfect state will admit. That ineffable glory, the fruition of which he expects in the upper world, he desires to partake even here, in some degree, by anticipation. Nor are these desires in vain. For, as he is dead to the law, and lives to God, as he believes in Jesus, and walks in the ways of holiness, he enjoys the smiles of Jehovah's countenance, and tastes the sweets of celestial joy. He possesses an infallible earnest, and has a delightful prelibation of the expected happiness.

He remembers that his duration here is short, and the time of his exit extremely uncertain. This is a spur to diligence in the performance of duty, and an incentive to watchfulness against the insurrections of indwelling sin, and the incursions of outward temptation. Such being his situation, his habitual desire is, to perform the commands of God with the greatest punctuality and as under the divine inspection; to fill up every station in life with the highest credit to his holy profession; and to render himself useful to all around him, by a heavenly conduct and a shining example, so long as he lives. To be found ready when his Lord shall come, to be found wakeful, with his lamp trimmed and burning, when the



Bridegroom calls, is a matter of infinite importance in his esteem.

Once more: As it is the desire of him who lives to God, thus to spend his time, and thus to perform his duty, so his principal end in all is the glory of God. This course of obedience and self-denial is not intended to *gain* the divine favor, or to *procure* the great inheritance, but for the *honor* of his eternal Sovereign and infinite Benefactor. Pardon of all sin, and complete reconciliation with our offended Maker, deliverance from the wrath to come, and a hope of future felicity, are not *procured* by our feeble endeavors, but *granted, freely granted*, by omnipotent grace. Of this, the man who lives to God is fully persuaded; he has not, therefore, the most distant thought of procuring them, by any thing which he can do. But gratitude to the dying Redeemer, and love to the blessed God, being the united and powerful principle from which he acts, the glory of the Supreme Cause, and the honor of the divine Mediator, constitute the exalted end. This is the highest end of which we can conceive. The inhabitants of the heavenly world, in all their wonderful orders, and in all their noblest services, can aim at nothing superior. Yet with such views, sublime as they are, ought the believer invariably to act, in performing every duty, in resisting every temptation, and in bearing every hardship, which may attend his progress in a course of sincere piety. And with such views he will act, in proportion as his mind is enlightened and faith is in exercise.

And now, reader, what is the tenor of *your* conduct? To what, or to whom do you *live*? Is it the immensely glorious God, or is it yourself and the world? On what have you placed your affections? to whom have you devoted your heart? Remember who it is that makes the tender and righteous demand, "My son give me thy heart." His infinite excellencies require it of you as a *man*; and if a *believer*, your obligations are unspeakably heightened. For, as such, you are an object of redeeming love, and a subject of regenerating grace. "You are not your own; you are bought with a price." If, then you profess yourself a Christian, consider the purport of that profession. By laying claim to the honorable character, you profess to "live to God." The character, how glorious! the profession, how noble! Disgrace not that holy name by which you are called. Dishonor not that life you profess to lead; lest you pierce yourself through with many sorrows, and cause the enemies of the cross to triumph.

Awful it is to think how many there are that bear the Christian character and profess to believe the gospel, who are yet far

from living to God. The world has their hearts, it engrosses their warmest affections. The language of their conduct is, "who will show us any *temporal* good?" or "where shall we find any *carнал* pleasure?" Such would do well to remember, that to "mind earthly things," to be "lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God," are the characters of the profane, in the sacred writings. Philip. iii. 19. 2 Tim. iii. 4. Such, whoever they may be, are the children of wrath; and, in the most emphatical sense, the enemies of the cross of Christ. Jam. iv. 4. Philip. iii. 18. The state of such is extremely dangerous; and, if grace prevent not, eternal destruction will be their portion. Reader! is this *your* case? If so, you ought either to reform your conduct, or renounce every pretence to Christianity. You cannot obey God and mammon. You cannot serve Christ and the world. They are opposite masters, and have opposite interests. If you profess to be dead to the law as a covenant, you must live to God, or you contradict yourself and blaspheme the gospel. Do not imagine that your state is safe, because you have adopted an orthodox system of sentiments, and have a consistent view of the capital doctrines of divine revelation. Such sentiments you may embrace, such a consistent view of divine truths you may have, and yet remain a hardened rebel against your Maker, and be a scandal to the great Redeemer's cause. You may be wise in theory, and right in your doctrinal principles, while the tenor of your conduct is fatally wrong, and your soul in the utmost jeopardy. For it is a certain truth, that our religious knowledge will be of no further use to ourselves, than it elevates our affections to heavenly things, meliorates our tempers, and rectifies our conduct. You may attend on a preached gospel, be a member of the purest visible church, and have a seat at the Lord's table, yet, after all, die unregenerate and be eternally lost. Think then, O carnal professor! what a shocking figure you will make among the millions of the damned, if at last you should perish. The case of impenitent Jews, or idolatrous heathens, who go to that place of torment, will not be so awful as yours. To think of one who had often heard the gospel, who professed to believe its sublime and glorious doctrines, and had frequently received the memorials of the body and the blood of Christ, to think of such an one not living to God, but in allowed iniquity, and dying in unbelief, is awful indeed! For the glorious gospel he so often heard, will be to him "the savor of death unto death;" and that superior knowledge of which he boasted, will give a dreadful emphasis to his torment, and aggravate his eternal ruin. It is great-

ly to be feared that in the end many such will be found; and take heed, reader! that you be not one of them.

Again: Do you profess not only to be dead to the law, and to believe the gospel, but also to live to God? If so, what is the *principle* of your obedience, and what is the *end* for which you perform it? Is self-love the principle, and self-preservation the end? or the love of God, and the glory of his eternal name? If the *former*, you are yet alive to the law; if the *latter*, it is the obedience which God accepts. Love to him whose perfections are infinite, love to him whose grace is unbounded, is the fruitful and delightful source of every work that is truly good. But as we love the Lord only in proportion as we know him, let it be your constant concern to increase in your acquaintance with him. To that end, study the cross of Christ; for there the glories of the Godhead shine; there they are displayed in the clearest manner, and appear with a winning aspect. These glories beheld in the face of Jesus Christ, will have a transforming influence. You will love God, you will desire to be like him. This will make duty easy, and the ways of holiness delightful. You will hate sin, not only as *condemning*, but also as *filthy* and *abominable*. Then out of gratitude to the bleeding Jesus, and for the glory of the Lord Jehovah, you will desire to obey every divine precept. Then you will not only *talk* about living to God, as being a duty, but you will *exemplify* it in your own conduct. You will make it appear that you love him, and that it is your main business to glorify him. And, except you evidence this in some degree, all your pretensions to vital religion and primitive Christianity will be in vain.

## SECTION VI.

*We must be dead to the law as a covenant, before we can live to God in holy and acceptable obedience.*

HAVING already observed that the great end designed by our being dead to the law, is "that we might live unto God," we now proceed to show, that it is impossible for such as are alive to the law as a covenant, to live unto God in holy and acceptable obedience. Or, in other words, that while a man is looking to his own righteousness as the condition of his justification, he can perform no works that are truly *good*, nor any obedience that is *acceptable* to God. This position may appear strange, and perhaps be rejected by many, as absolutely false. I am, notwithstanding, fully persuaded that it will be found on impartial inquiry,

to contain an important truth. And, in proof of it, the following things are offered to consideration.

Let us once more advert to those emphatical words which have furnished matter for the preceding sections; for in them the truth we would now confirm and illustrate, is very plainly and strongly implied. Thus they read: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." When an unerring writer asserts, "I am dead to the law, THAT I MIGHT live unto God," does he not signify, beyond all reasonable doubt, that while he was alive to the law he COULD NOT live to God? If the phrase here used have any sense, or be used with any propriety, it must suggest that idea. If he *might* have lived to God while he sought righteousness and life by the law, and before he was dead to it, what tolerable reason can be given for his thus speaking? And that the apostle had as good opportunities, and as great a zeal so to have done, as any other man, if such a thing had been practicable, will not be disputed. This, therefore, I humbly conceive, is no contemptible proof of the point.

The same inspired author, in another part of his invaluable writings, says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, THAT WE SHOULD BRING FORTH FRUIT UNTO GOD." Rom. vii. 4. Here we are taught that we must be *dead* to the law, before we can be *married* to Christ; and that we must be married to him before we *can* bring forth fruit unto God. The glorious end designed, and the happy effect produced by the believer's conjugal relation to Jesus, are included in his "bringing forth fruit unto God." That relation, therefore, must be prior to this effect. And it is quite evident from the passage, that our being *dead* to the law, is *previous* to the commencement of that high and honorable relation.\* And as children are called the "fruit of the womb," Psalm cxxvii. 3, so the apostle intimates that those works which are acceptable to God, and which follow upon this relation taking place between Christ and the sinner, may be compared to a *legitimate* offspring. Consequently the best works performed by us, before we are dead to the law and married to Jesus, can be accounted no other than *spurious*, and therefore rejected of God.

In the same instructive paragraph it is said, "Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, THAT WE SHOULD SERVE in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." Rom.

\* It is of the believer's open espousals to Christ, that the apostle here treats.



vii. 6. From the plain import of these words it appears, that the law must be *dead* to us, before we can be delivered from it. And that we must be delivered from it before we can serve God in *newness of spirit*; acting from a new principle, and with new views, having a new and a right spirit formed in us. But this is not the case of any who are alive to the law. They who are *delivered* from the law, they to whom the law is *dead*, and they only, are the happy persons.

That no man who is alive to the law can live to God, will further appear, if it be considered that the state in which he lies is that of a condemned criminal. For while alive to the law, he is under it as a covenant; and as a breaker of it, is obnoxious to its condemning power. Being "of the works of the law," seeking justification by his own obedience in conformity to it, he is "under the curse." Gal. iii. 10. His person is accursed, and his state is damnable, according to the tenor of that law to which he looks for life. This is plain from the scripture. If, then, his *person* be accursed, his *works* cannot be accepted. If his *state*, in the eye of the law, be that of a condemned rebel, his *conduct* cannot be supposed well pleasing in the eye of the great Lawgiver. His state must be good and his person accepted, before he can live to God, or glorify him in holy obedience.

Further: No man can live to God, no man can perform acceptable obedience while alive to the law, because he has not *vital union* with Christ. While alive to the law, we are in unbelief. While in unbelief, we are in our natural state. And while in our natural state, we are enemies to God and children of wrath: Rom. viii. 7. Col. i. 21. Eph. ii. 3. John iii. 36, consequently have no *vital union* with Christ.\* And that none who are destitute of union with him can do any good works, is clear from his own words: *Without me*—without a union with me, similar to that of the branch to the vine, *ye can do nothing*. John xv. 5. Ye can neither resist temptation successfully, nor perform duty acceptably: ye can bear no fruit to the glory of God. Here our Lord informs us that the human heart is never influenced by holy tempers; that the human life cannot be productive of good works till a man be united to Christ, any more than a branch can bear valuable fruit while in a state of separation from the vine. And that so long as persons continue in a state of alienation from Jesus Christ,

\* That the chosen of God have union with Christ, prior to their regeneration, is readily granted. But then I humbly conceive, whatever other epithets we may give that union, it cannot with propriety be called *vital*, till life be communicated to the dead sinner, which is done in regeneration. Then it is, and not till then, that we become living branches in the true vine. Vid. Wits. Animad. Iren. esp. vi. § 1, 2, 3.

they, with all their performances, are like a broken, withered branch; fit for nothing but to be cast into the fire and consumed from the earth. Before we have a living union with the great Head of the church, we are not favored with the aids of divine grace, nor are we partakers of the Holy Spirit. And as it is the province of that sacred Agent to enlighten the dark understanding, and lead into all truth, so it is only by his assistance we can perform that which is good, or have the least inclination so to do; according to that saying, "For it is God which worketh in you, both to *will* and to *do*, of his good pleasure." Philip. ii. 13.

Again: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi. 6. The faith designed, is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." It is that by which the just live, and to which a divine righteousness is revealed in the gospel. Heb. x. 38. Rom. i. 17. It has the Son of God for its object, and salvation for its end. Gal. ii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 9. But all who are alive to the law, are destitute of it. This appears from hence: "They who believe on Jesus, believe on him as the justifier of the ungodly." Rom. iv. 5. They who are alive to the law, have no such dependance. It is directly contrary to their views and their inclinations. They are seeking to establish their own righteousness, and look for acceptance with God in that way. They overlook that provision which grace has made for the entirely unworthy, and slight that righteousness which the Mediator performed for the justification of the ungodly. Being destitute, therefore, of that faith which purifies the heart and works by love; being unbelievers, "whose mind and conscience are defiled," and to whom "nothing is pure," Titus i. 15, nothing they have, nothing they do, is acceptable to God. Consequently they cannot live to him or glorify his name.

Once more: The *love* of God being the principle, and the *glory* of God the end of all acceptable obedience, the man who does not act from *that* delightful principle, and with a view to *this* exalted end, cannot be said to live unto God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." But whoever is alive to the law, acts from a different principle, and aims at a different end. Such a person may act from self-love, or pharisaical pride, but he cannot act from love to his Maker, and with a view to his glory. As ignorant of God, he cannot love him. As in his natural state, his carnal mind is enmity against him. Cleaving to the law for life, and depending on his own righteousness, he *rebels* against the gospel, and *slights* the great Redeemer. Does he abstain from an outward course of sin? It is

not because he loves holiness, or from a sense of the contrariety there is in sin to the perfections of the Deity, that he forbears to gratify his vicious appetites to the full extent of his power; but because he is apprehensive that disagreeable consequences would follow upon such a conduct. Does he attend religious ordinances? It is not from love to their great Institutor, or because he delights in them as means of communion with God, but because he loves himself, and hopes, by observing the divine commands, to obtain favor at the great tribunal. Would his conscience be easy, and his hope of heaven continue, without these devotional services, he would drop them without hesitation, and leave their performance to others. A slavish fear of hell, and a mercenary expectation of heaven, self-love, and self-preservation, are the main springs of his moral and religious conduct, and the end which he has in view. In certain situations of life, a regard to the decency and present usefulness of a moral conversation, and an esteem for a religious character, may bridle the baser passions, and strongly urge to a religious profession; but whether we avoid sin and practise duty, with a view to obtain the favor of heaven, and escape everlasting misery, or with a design to gain the advantages attending a moral behaviour, and the reputation of appearing religious, it is very certain that we are far from living to God, while a sincere affection for him, and a supreme concern for his glory, have not a prevailing influence on our hearts and lives. We may therefore safely conclude that it is absolutely necessary a man should be "dead to the law," should give up all expectations of justification by his own obedience, before he can "live to God" in the performance of holy duties, and the practice of real virtue.

Hence we may learn what numbers there are who, with a blind zeal and self-righteous views, strongly assert the necessity of human obedience, in order to acceptance with God, who are not able to perform any good works. They, indeed, fondly imagine themselves to be the greatest friends to the interests of holiness, because they are strongly attached to the law as a covenant. And as they loudly plead the necessity of living to God, so they greatly please themselves with a fancied obedience to his divine precepts; while the doctrine of sovereign grace, the declarations of a free Saviour and a finished salvation, without their doings or deservings, are held in detestation by them. And why? Because they suppose that such doctrines received, must make void the obligations of the law in every sense, and sap the foundations of all morality. Thus they gratify their native pride, under the fair pretext of a superior

regard to the law, and a flaming zeal for holiness. But if the arguments already adduced be founded in truth, the vanity of such a pretence is evident. For hence it appears that the doctrine of grace is so far from being licentious, that without an experimental acquaintance with it, we cannot live to God, nor perform any work that is truly good. Till possessed of such an acquaintance with it, we have no faith in Jesus, no love to our Maker, no desire to live to his glory. It is the gospel, in the hand of the Spirit, by which faith is implanted and love produced in the heart. These plants of heavenly origin grow and flourish, and bring forth fruit, under its benign influence. It is the honored instrument in Jehovah's hand for enlightening the ignorant and reforming the profligate. An experience of its power makes the ways of holiness pleasant, and the practice of duty delightful. Yes, reader, the more you know of the glorious gospel, the more will you love its heavenly Author. So shall you find, by increasing and happy experience, that as nothing in the world can be compared with it, for affording relief to a *distressed conscience*, so there is nothing equal to it for establishing duty on a *solid basis* enforcing it by *cogent motives*, and directing it to a *worthy end*.

How happy then is your state, believer! Your person being accepted of God, your works are pleasing to him. And a remembrance that "your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord," is a noble encouragement to abound and continue in well doing. Your works of faith and labors of love, being fruits of a vital union with Jesus Christ, and indications of an obedient, grateful heart, are highly pleasing to your heavenly Father. Surely, then, it should be your fervent desire and constant care, as a living branch of the true vine, to bear the most generous fruit in rich abundance. O, believer! it is your happiness to have every sin pardoned, and every curse removed! to believe in the Son of God, and to enjoy communion with him. Yours it is, to love the Lord and seek his glory; to perform duty by divine assistance, and to have your sacred services and spiritual sacrifices presented to God, and rendered acceptable to him by Jesus, your great High Priest. Yours is the high prerogative of "living to God." Prize the privilege; walk worthy of your exalted station and heavenly calling.

As there are, comparatively, very few that are capable of living to God, if you, reader, profess to be one of those few, your obligations to obedience are many, and unspeakably great. And you will do well to remember, that to *talk* of being possessed of superior advantages for the practice of



virtue, and at the same time *live* as do the world in common, are a great inconsistency. To pretend that you believe in the Lord Redeemer, are in a justified state, and have delightful communion with the best of Beings—that you have a clear knowledge of divine truth, and a high esteem for the ordinances of Christ, in their primitive purity—to pretend to these very superior advantages, while the only discernable difference between you and the world, consists in your entertaining a *different set* of sentiments, or having *different forms* of external worship, is inconsistent and shameful. If this be the case, your speculative knowledge of evangelical truth is sadly abused. It is converted into fuel for your spiritual pride; while your conduct is a standing reproach to the name that you bear, and a foul disgrace to the truths which you hold. For in proportion as our light is clearer, and our advantages greater, our example should be brighter, and our lives more useful.

#### SECTION VII.

##### *Of the law as a rule of conduct to believers.*

WE have already observed that the moral law may be considered either as the formula of the covenant of works, or as a rule of conduct. Under the *former* consideration we have shown that believers are dead to it, and delivered from it; that it has no demands upon them, nor any dominion over them. It now remains that we consider it under its *latter* denomination. And here we shall endeavor to prove, that as a *rule of conduct*, it deserves and requires the sincere and uninterrupted regards of all who believe.

That the law may be considered as the rule of our obedience in general, even when it ceases to have any claims upon us, or any threatenings against us, as a covenant, is a truth of great importance, and easy to be apprehended. Some persons, indeed, either cannot or will not see the moral law in any other light than that of a covenant; and imagine that if we lose the idea of the *reward* it promises to perfect obedience, and of the *curse* it denounces against transgression, we lose the idea of the *law* itself. Consequently they must maintain that when a person is delivered from it as a *covenant*, he is no longer concerned with it, under any consideration. But this is a great mistake, and pregnant with dangerous consequences.

In order to set this matter in a clearer light, it may be of use to observe, that the idea of the law as a *rule* is prior, in the order of nature, to our conceptions of the law as a *cove-*

*nant*. For man being formed a reasonable creature, and a subject of moral government; being designed to propagate his species, and fitted for social life—it was necessary that he should have a rule for his conduct, and have the bounds of his duty prescribed; that he should have such a rule as included both his duty to God and his duty to his fellow creatures. When we consider mankind as a race of rational beings, their common relation to the great Creator, and their unavoidable connection one with another, seem necessarily to require it. Such a rule we have in the moral law. And the nature of things required that some such rule for the substance of it, should have been given to our first parents in paradise; even supposing the eternal Sovereign had not been pleased to connect a promise of life with a conformity to it. As creatures in a state of probation, and as accountable to God for the use of all their time and the exercise of all their powers, it could not be otherwise. To deny this, is to suppose that Jehovah might have created a number of rational beings in strict connection one with another, and all in a state of continual dependence upon himself, and at the same time that it would have been consistent with all his perfections to have had *no regard* to their conduct, whatever it might be, either towards himself or one to another, which, in reference to moral good and evil, would have excluded Providence from the world.

But though it was necessary that our great progenitor, while in a state of innocence, should have a prescription of duty, or a rule for his conduct, there *was* not, there *could* not be, any necessity arising from that relation in which he stood to God, that this rule of his behaviour should have the form of a *covenant*. Yet this was actually the case. His bountiful Creator not only informed him of his duty, and threatened punishment against disobedience, but, in the threatening itself, it was strongly implied that his persevering obedience should be *rewarded* with life, and a happy immortality. The language of that law which he was under is, "The man who doeth these things," who performs a perfect righteousness, "shall live in them." So our Lord, referring to the same law, says, "This do, and thou shalt live." This promise made to obedience, gives the law the nature and form of a *covenant*. This constitution, therefore, was an act of divine condescension and divine sovereignty. Infinite justice made it necessary that an offence against the Majesty of heaven should be *punished*; but the most perfect obedience of a creature, absolutely and perpetually dependent upon the Creator, gives no claim to the least *reward*. Had our great progenitor Adam, done all that was commanded, he

must at last, Jesus himself being judge, have been but an "unprofitable servant." Not the least pittance of merit could have arisen from it. Perfect obedience is a *debt* which every one owes to his Maker; consequently, had our first parent continued in his primitive state, he would have had no demand on the eternal Sovereign; it being absurd to imagine that any one should be obliged to reward his debtor, merely for discharging a just debt.\* There is, therefore a conceivable, a real, an important difference between the law as a *covenant*, and the same law as a *rule*. And as in the order of nature, and in the necessary connections and dependencies of things, the idea of it as a rule, is prior to that of a covenant; so there is not the least absurdity in supposing that it may *entirely cease* to the believer, in regard to the perfect, personal obedience it requires as the condition of life, and the curse it annexes to every sin, while it continues in *full force*, as the rule of his actions.†

That the moral law is a rule of life to believers, may be proved by various arguments. Some few of the many which might be produced, I shall now offer to the reader's consideration. Paul, we find, even in that very chapter where he treats the most largely and explicitly concerning believers being dead to the law, and the law being dead to them, asserts with respect to himself, "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man." Rom. vii. 22. Now, whatever law that is which he here designs, he informs us that he delighted in it "after the inward man." By which expressions he does not intend the soul, in contradistinction from the body, but the mind, considered as *renewed*, in opposition to the *corruption* of nature, still inherent. This law, therefore, cannot be that which is *ceremonial*, for that was abrogated by the death of Christ. Nor can it be the law of *sin*, for that was his greatest burden, as appears from the context. Nor can it be the law of his *mind*, or that new and holy disposition which was implanted in his heart in regeneration; for then the sense would be, "I delight in the new disposition of my

mind, after my renewed mind." Nor can it be the moral law as a *covenant*, for to that he declares he was dead. It remains then that it must be the moral law, as the *rule* of his obedience to God. In the law thus considered, he greatly delighted. He saw it was "holy, and just, and good." That fervent love which he had to his God, that sincere affection which he had to his neighbor, caused him to esteem it highly, and to observe it with diligence. And whoever is possessed of the holy and heavenly principle, cannot but love that law which requires the constant exercise of it. Rom. vii. 25. "So then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God."

In another part of the same epistle, he evidently exhorts his believing correspondents to the practice of duty, by setting before them the precepts and prohibition of the moral law. These are his words: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery: Thou shalt not kill: Thou shalt not steal: Thou shalt not bear false witness: Thou shalt not covet: And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10. Now to what purpose does the infallible teacher make use of these precepts and prohibitions, and that in the very language of the decalogue, when exhorting believers to good works, if they have nothing to do with the law? Where is the *propriety*, where is the *reason* of his doing so, on supposition that it is not the rule of their conduct? For no one acquainted with the gospel can imagine that he is here urging the law upon them as a covenant of works, which prescribes duty as the condition of life; and yet there is no other light in which to consider it, if it is denied to be a rule of conduct. I conclude, therefore, that the inspired author has here taught us, in a very emphatical manner, that the law is a rule of life to believers.

The same experienced saint and incomparable man, when writing to the church at Ephesus, says, "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." This exhortation he enforces, by adding, "Honor thy father and mother;" which are the words of the law, and "the first commandment with promise." Eph. vi. 1, 2. Now is it not strange, exceeding strange, that the apostle should thus refer to the law and expressly mention its precepts, when exhorting the people of God to perform their respective duties; and that he should do it not only *once*, but *repeatedly*, and to different churches, See also Gal. v. 13, 14, if he

\* Mr. Jonathan Edwards on Original Sin, p. 412.

† The ten commandments," says a well known author, "being the substance of the law of nature, a representation of God's image, and a beam of his holiness, behoved forever, unalterably to be a rule of life to mankind, in all possible states, conditions, and circumstances. Nothing but the utter destruction of human nature, could destroy them of that office, since God is unchangeable in his image and holiness. Hence their being a rule of life to Adam and his posterity, had no dependence on their becoming the covenant of works; but they would have been that rule, though there never had been any such covenant. Yea, whatever covenant was introduced, whether of works or of grace, or whatever, form might be put upon them, they behoved still to remain the rule of life; no covenant, no form whatsoever, could ever prejudice their royal dignity." Boston's Works, p. 354. Note (g.)



did not consider it as the rule of their conduct? If the moral law had been entirely abrogated, if believers had been freed from all concern with it, he must have known it. And if he knew it, methinks it is absolutely unaccountable that he should in this manner make use of it, and urge its sacred injunctions, when writing to a church of Christ called out from among the Gentiles. What! was the Lord's ambassador so much at a loss for motives and arguments to enforce his divine Master's commands, even on the minds of those who were in professed subjection to him, that he must, in order to gain his point, make use of an *antiquated law*—a law with which they had *no concern*! That was far from him: the thought be far from us! That first-rate minister in the Messiah's kingdom was well persuaded that the holy law was a rule for the conduct of Christians. The glorious Surety having paid it the highest respect, in performing that perfect obedience which it required, and in suffering the dreadful penalty it threatened as a covenant; he knew that it deserved the most sincere and uninterrupted regard, from all who professed to believe in Jesus, in their whole conversation. Without supposing this, we cannot discern either propriety or sense in thus making use of it when addressing believers.

We have a testimony to the truth for which we plead, from the pen of another apostle, which, as it appears pertinent to our purpose, may be briefly considered. James, in perfect agreement with Paul, says, "If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well." James ii. 8. That it is the moral law of which he speaks, cannot admit of a doubt, for he expressly mentions one of its principle commands. Now says he, *if ye, believers, fulfil the royal law* of love one to another, without any difference of rich and poor, of high and low, *according to the scripture*, in which it is written, *thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well*. Ye act agreeably to the will of your heavenly Father, and the commandment of your divine Lord, who is King in Zion. Acts of Christian kindness and brotherly love to your fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians, proceeding from love to God, and with a view to his glory, are good works; such as the Lord himself will acknowledge to be well done. Here we may further observe, that in loving our neighbor and in evidencing that love by a suitable series of action, we ought to have our eye upon that *authority* which enjoins it, and that *law* which requires it. It is the authority of God in his law which we ought to regard. I now proceed to confirm the truth by other considerations.

If the moral law be not a rule of life to believers, either there is some other and a new rule given in its stead, or there is not. If another, it may be presumed that it is either more or less perfect than that contained in the moral law. But *more* perfect it cannot be, without supposing that the old, the eternal law, was *imperfect*; to suppose which is absurdly blasphemous. If it be less perfect, the consequence is plain. It is not a complete system of duty. It admits of imperfections. It connives at sin. But for any one to imagine that infinite wisdom would contrive, and that infinite holiness would give *such* a rule for the conduct of rational creatures, is absolutely inconsistent with the divine character, and pregnant with blasphemy. Such a rule, therefore condemns itself, and sinks with its own weight. But if there be *not* another, then it follows by necessary consequence, that as there is *no rule* to regulate the conduct of believers, they can neither obey nor disobey. Sin and duty, as to them, are unmeaning names and empty sounds. For obedience pre-supposes a command. And it is equally evident that "where there is no law," no rule of action, there can be "no transgression." For how should that be sin which is not forbidden, which is not the breach of any law? But if all irregularities of temper and conduct be forbidden to believers, and if dispositions and practices of a contrary kind be required of them, it must be by a law; a law they are bound to regard, as the rule of duty both to God and man. The sentiment opposed, represents the Holy One of God as the minister of sin; for it supposes that Christ has dissolved all obligation to duty, in reference to his disciples; than which nothing can be more false, or more derogatory to our Saviour's honor. The satisfaction he made to eternal justice, saves the persons of believers from final condemnation and everlasting punishment; but the nature of their actions remains the same. Every affection of heart, and every action of life, which the law forbids and condemns in others, is equally forbidden and equally criminal in them; nay, they being considered as knowing their duty better, as under additional obligations, and as having superior motives to the performance of it, if there be any difference, on the comparison, in regard to any impurity of heart or irregularity of life, it lies against them. Though redeemed from the curse of the law, they are under obligation to observe its precepts; nor would it be either to their honor or happiness to be otherwise.

I suppose it will not be denied by any who acknowledge the Bible to contain a divine revelation, that the saints and people of God, under the ancient Jewish economy,

were bound to regard the moral law as the rule of their conduct. Yet, it is evident they were no more under it as a covenant, nor any more obnoxious to its curse, than real Christians under the gospel dispensation. They who believed in the promised Messiah before he appeared, were pardoned and justified, were sanctified and saved; and that by the same glorious grace, and the same all-sufficient Mediator, with all who have known the Lord since the eternal Word became incarnate; the way of justification and salvation having been but *one*, and precisely the same in all ages. If then, those ancient saints were bound to regard the law as the rule of their moral behavior, what reason can be given why believers now should not be under the same obligation? Especially since our Lord has declared in the most solemn manner, that he "came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law." To fulfil it as a covenant, by his own consummate obedience, and by his most bitter sufferings in the stead of his people; and to enforce on their minds, by the most cogent motives, its heavenly precepts, as a perfect rule of duty. So that whether we consider the law as a rule of duty, or as a covenant of works, it is not made void by the coming of Christ, or the doctrine of grace, but on the contrary it is firmly established and highly magnified. Rom. iii. 31. Isa. xlii. 21.

If believers be not under the *commanding* power of the law, supposing them to act ever so contrary to it, they are not chargeable with sinning against it, nor can they be denominated transgressors of it. For instance: the law says, "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart;" that is, with a supreme and perfect affection. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." These are its capital commands; these are the sum of the law. But if the law be not a rule of life to the Christian, if he be not under its commanding power, he is no longer obliged to love either God or his neighbor. Consequently, on supposition that he love neither of them, he is not guilty in the eye of the law, nor in the least a breaker of it. For where there is no legal right to command, there can be no authority to pronounce guilty. If, therefore, the believer be not under the commanding power of the law, whatever the dispositions of his heart, or the actions of his life may be, he is no transgressor of the law, it having no concern at all with him. Such are the shocking absurdities, and such the abominable blasphemy, which follow a denial of the truth for which we contend.

We may argue also from the experience of the Christian, and the dictates of his own conscience. When he reflects on the corruptions of his heart, the imperfections

of his duties, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, what is the standard by which he forms an estimate of these things? Some rule of duty he must have; some rule he must in his own conscience acknowledge, or he could not judge of the dispositions of his heart and the actions of his life, so as to pronounce them either good or evil, perfect or defective, and be pained or pleased on the reflection. And what rule can this be, but the moral law? Is it not a complete one, and fit for the purpose? Is there any sin which is not forbidden, is there any duty which is not commanded, by that law which requires the constant exercise of perfect love to God, and perfect love to man? Can the believer *acquit* himself, in the court of his own conscience, when he is persuaded that his tempers or actions are contrary to it? Or does he ever *condemn* them as criminal, but on a supposition that there is something in them which is forbidden by it? Was it ever known that a Christian should say, of his inclinations or actions, "I pronounce these to be evil, though *required* by the moral law, and I declare those to be good, though *contrary* to it?" An infallible pen has informed us, that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Nor is its usefulness in this respect confined to the time when a sinner is first awakened and converted. It is of use, in the hand of the Spirit, in all the future progress of the Christian life. As the believer grows in grace, he sees more and more of its purity and spirituality, and is proportionally humbled under a sense of his own depravity and imperfections. If, then, it be of use to a believer still to convince him of sin, and still to humble him for it, and if sin be no other than a "transgression of the law," it follows that it must be the rule of his conduct.

The law considered as *moral*, is founded on the nature of things. The sublime perfections of Jehovah, and the relation he stands in to man, as being his Creator, Preserver, and Governor, the dependent condition of man, and the blessings he receives from his Maker, constitute that foundation on which the law is built, as it respects our duty to God, in the exercise of perfect love, and the performance of holy worship. And as the law regards our neighbor, it is founded on that mutual relation which we stand in one to another, in the present state of existence. In proportion, therefore, to the stability of that foundation on which the law is built, is the law itself. If those *relations* from which all our obligations to God and one to another arise, be firm and unchangeable, such also must be the *obligations* themselves; for the several relations and obligations co-exist. This being the case, it follows by necessa-



ry consequence, that while Jehovah is possessed of absolute perfection, and a man a dependent being while God is God, and man is man, that law which requires *perfect love* to our Maker is unchangeable. And so long as our relation one to another continues the same, it cannot but be the duty of every one to *love his neighbor as he loves himself*. Consequently, so far as we come short in either of these respects, we fail in the performance of our duty, and are chargeable with sin.

Once more: Why should any one wish to be free from the law, considered as a rule of conduct? It commands nothing but what is right, nor forbids any thing that is not wrong. As the things it requires are worthy of God and useful to man, so the things it prohibits are hateful to him and hurtful to us. To suppose it *possible* for God to approve those things which the law condemns, would be a flagrant dishonor done to his character; and to imagine that men might perform them without injuring their own souls, is a great mistake. Besides, is it not the design of the Holy Spirit, in the regeneration of sinners, to produce in them an habitual desire of doing that which is right? But can those dispositions or actions be accounted right, which are contrary to the attributes of God, or inconsistent with a due acknowledgment of them? When the divine Sovereign displays his perfections, he manifests his glory; and so far as we acknowledge those perfections in a suitable manner, we glorify him. Now as the law only requires us to treat God as God, and our fellow-creature as our fellow-creature—in other words, as it only requires us to treat objects and things *as they are* in their own nature, and in their several relations to us—its precepts and prohibitions must be unalterable, and the never failing rule of the Christian's conduct †

It must indeed be acknowledged, that a complete conformity to this high and heavenly rule, is what the most holy and zealous believer cannot attain. A perfect personal holiness is not attainable by mortals. For “if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Notwithstanding, the law is no less the standard of duty, is no less the rule by which we ought to walk, than if we could observe it with the greatest punctuality. And every one who pretends to faith in Jesus ought to exert his best endeavors, and use his utmost diligence, that both his tempers and actions may correspond with it as much as possible. This is his indispensable duty, and this, if a real Christian, will be his sincere desire.

Nor has the true believer any objection to it, or any fears from it, thus considered. It is no longer a *fiery law*, thundering out anathemas, and flashing vengeance against him. No, it is mild and gentle. He sees that its precepts are highly salutary, and its prohibitions exactly right. He would not wish to have them altered. Love to God, and love to our neighbor, is a compendium of its precepts; and in the exercise of that love he desires to abound. As to its prohibitions, he knows that the things forbidden would be an injury to him were they pursued; therefore he esteems it his happiness to abstain from them. The new disposition he received in his regeneration, inclines him to love God and delight in his law as pure and holy. The gospel furnishes him with the strongest arguments and most winning motives to abound in obedience, while it is his earnest prayer that the Spirit of grace would afford effectual assistance for the performance of it. And it is his greatest grief that he does not more constantly and more perfectly transcribe the sacred precepts into his conduct, and cause them to shine in his own example.

\* Stapferi Institut. Theolog. Polem. Tom. 1, Cap. iii. 1435, 1436.

† The very learned and celebrated Vitringa, when reasoning on this important subject, speaks to the following effect: “When Paul affirms that believers, being under grace, are ‘free from the law,’ he must not be understood as asserting, that they are loosed from an obligation to observe the precepts which constitute the substance of those moral laws which are contained in the writings of Moses. For how absurd, how blasphemous, how shocking it would be to suppose that the people of God, under the gospel dispensation, are not bound by any law to revere and love and adore their Maker; nor under any obligation to seek the good, or promote the happiness of their fellow creatures! Certain it is, that grace and faith neither do nor were ever intended to free believers from the obligations and laws of humanity. No: their benevolent design was, to restore mankind to happiness, and to perfect them in holiness. But were Christians released from the law of love, they would not be in the common condition of humanity. For what is it to be a man, but to be a creature endued with reason, dependent on God for existence, and for all the comforts of life; from whom only he can expect salvation from every evil, and the enjoyment of every good that is necessary to perfect his nature and render him completely blessed? To God therefore, as his Creator,

Preserver, Governor, and Supreme Good, he necessarily stands related; so related as to be accountable to him for the enjoyment of every favor, the exercise of all his powers, and the performance of every act. As Jehovah's consummate perfections demand of a rational creature, that is absolutely dependent upon him, and formed for his glory, the highest acts of adoration, as the dominion of God, over all creatures, requires obedience and subjection; as the majesty and justice of God challenges humility and reverence, so the boundless goodness of God, which is the source of all the comforts we have received, of all the blessings we now enjoy, and of all the happiness we hereafter expect—that *infinite goodness*, I say, to which every man's conscience bears witness, obliges the reasonable creature to love God; that is to cleave to him with all the force of inclination and all the fervor of affection, as being supremely amiable, and to rejoice in his happiness, as a Being of boundless excellence. And as one divine perfection implies all others, and one relation of God to man comprehends all others, including at the same time all the duties of man to God, which arise from those relations, so all the duties we owe to God might be demonstrated from almost any of those divine perfections which have a relation to man.” Vitring. Observ. Sac. Tom. II. l. vi. c. 13, § 1.

Besides, the believer beholds the law—not in the hands of Moses, and as surrounded with the flames of Sinai—but in the hands of that Prince of peace who is King in Zion. He sees that the dear, the adorable, the ascended Jesus, having fulfilled its high demands as a covenant, and released him from its awful curse, now employs it as an instrument of his benign government, for the good of the redeemed, and the glory of his own eternal name. As in the hand of Christ it is a friend and a guide, pointing out the way in which the Christian ought to walk, so as to express his gratitude to God for his benefits, and glorify the Lord Redeemer. It shows him also, at the same time, how imperfect his own obedience is, and so is a happy mean of keeping him humble at the foot of sovereign grace, and entirely dependent on the righteousness of his divine Sponsor.

And now, reader, what think you of the law as a rule of conduct? Is it pleasant, is it delightful to you? In vain you profess to know the glorious gospel, while you continue an enemy to the holy law. For as the law, in its covenant form, is the appointed mean of convincing the careless sinner of his need of that righteousness which is revealed in the gospel, for the justification of his *person* before God, so the gospel, bringing adequate relief to the distressed conscience, is the happy instrument of conciliating the believer's regards to the law as a rule of conduct, that his *faith* may be evidenced in the sight of men. Thus the law and the gospel are mutually subservient one to another, while both agree to promote the happiness of the redeemed, and the glory of their divine Author. He, therefore, who does not pay an habitual regard to the law in the way of *obedience*, has no experience of the gospel in a way of *comfort*. And as he tramples on that divine authority which shines in the former, so he despises the boundless grace which is revealed in the latter. Such an one is an enemy to both, and his state is most deplorable.

Remember, reader, that you may talk as much as you please about the holy tendency of evangelical principles, but the adversaries of the gospel will never believe you, if they do not see the truth of what you say, exemplified in your own conduct. The

language of the observations they make on your conversation is, "Ye who talk with such fluency and confidence about the doctrines of *grace*, and the necessity of *faith*, let us see what influence these doctrines have on your own tempers and your own behaviour? Show us your faith by your works?" This is a reasonable demand. They are authorized to make it. And wo, wo, be to that professor of evangelical truth, who cannot in some measure satisfy it! For if his conduct be not in some degree answerable to his profession, he will soon be treated as one of the greatest enemies to Christ and his cause.

Are you a believer in Jesus? one that "knows the grace of God in truth?" You have the purest and strongest motives imaginable to cause you to regard the law. Has the SON OF THE HIGHEST done all that you were bound to perform as the condition of life, and suffered all that you were condemned to sustain as the penalty annexed to disobedience? Has he done and suffered all this in *your stead*, that he might procure a full, final, and everlasting salvation for you, a poor damnable sinner? Has he expressed his regard to the law as a covenant, not in words but in *deeds*, in such deeds as astonish the universe? and shall you be backward to manifest your love to the law as a rule of duty, by a serious, holy heavenly conduct? Did HE whom angels adore, *obey*, and *bleed*, and *die*, DIE an accursed death, that the claims of the law might be all answered? and shall it seem hard to you to deny yourself, to subdue your lusts, and walk by this heavenly rule? Is it the general and popular clamor against the free and genuine gospel, "that it makes void the law?" and shall it not be your constant business and fervent prayer, so to observe the sacred precepts as to be a living confutation of that vile slander? Do not reason and conscience, scripture and experience, all concur to show the expediency, the utility, the necessity, of conforming your life to the law as a rule? O, believer! yours is the *happy* state—let yours be the *holy* life. Let it appear that though dead to the law as a covenant, you *abhor* the things it forbids, and, *delight* in the things it commands. Then shall you stop the mouths of gainsayers; then shall you glorify the name of your God. Amen.



# COME, AND WELCOME, TO JESUS CHRIST;

OR,

## A PLAIN AND PROFITABLE DISCOURSE

ON

JOHN VI. 37.

SHOWING THE CAUSE, TRUTH, AND MANNER, OF THE COMING OF A SINNER TO JESUS CHRIST; WITH HIS HAPPY RECEPTION, AND BLESSED ENTERTAINMENT.

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BY JOHN BUNYAN.

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And they shall come which were ready to perish.—*Isaiah xxvii. 13.*

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*All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.—John vi. 37.*

A LITTLE before, in this chapter, you may read that the Lord Jesus walked on the sea to go to Capernaum, having sent his disciples before in a ship; but the wind was contrary, by which means the ship was hindered in her passage. Now about the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came walking on the sea, and overtook them; at the sight of whom they were afraid.

*Note,* When providences are black and terrible to God's people, the Lord Jesus shows himself to them in a wonderful manner; the which sometimes they can as little bear, as they can the things that were terrible to them. They were afraid of the wind and water; they were also afraid of their Lord and Saviour, when he appeared to them in that state.

But he said, "Be not afraid, It is I."

*Note,* That the end of the appearing of the Lord Jesus unto his people, (though the manner of his appearance be never so terrible,) is to allay their fears and perplexities.

Then they received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither it went.

*Note,* When Christ is absent from his people, they go on but slowly, and with great difficulty; but when he joineth himself unto them, Oh! how fast they steer their course! how soon are they at their journey's end!

The people now among whom he last preached, when they saw that both Jesus was gone and his disciples, they also took

shipping, and came to Capernaum seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him, they, wondering, asked him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? But the Lord Jesus slighting their compliment, answered, "Verily, verily, ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled."

*Note,* A people may follow Christ far for base ends, as these went after him beyond sea for loaves. A man's belly will carry him a great way in religion; yea, a man's belly will make him venture far for Christ.

*Note again,* They are not feigning compliments, but gracious intentions, that crown the work in the eyes of Christ; or thus, it is not the toil and business of professors, but their love to him, that makes him approve of them.

*Note again,* When men shall look for friendly entertainment at Christ's hand, if their hearts be rotten, even then will they meet with a check and rebuke. "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled."

*Yet observe again,* He doth not refuse to give, even to these, good counsel: He bids them to labor for the meat that endureth to eternal life. O how willing would Jesus Christ have even those professors that come to him with pretences only, come to him sincerely, that they may be saved.

The text, you will find, is, after much more discourse with and about his people, and it is uttered by the Lord Jesus, as the conclusion of the whole, and intimateth, that since they were professors in pretence only, and therefore such as his soul could not delight in, as such, that he would content himself with a remnant that his Father

had bestowed upon him. As who should say, "I am not like to be honored in that salvation; but the Father has bestowed upon me a people, and they shall come to me in truth, and in them will I be satisfied." The text before may be called *Christ's repose*; in the fulfilling thereof he resteth himself content, after much labor and many sermons spent, as it were, in vain. As he saith by the prophet, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain." (Isa. xlix. 4.)

But as there he saith, "My judgment is with the Lord, and my work with God:" so in the text he saith, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." By these words, therefore, the Lord Jesus comforteth himself under the consideration of the dissimulation of some of his followers. He also thus betook himself to rest under the consideration of the little effect that his ministry had in Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida: "I thank thee, O Father," said he, "Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. xi. 25. Luke x. 21.)

The text, in general, consists of two parts, and hath special respect to the Father and the Son; as also their joint management of the salvation of the people. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

The first part of the text, as is evident, respected the Father and his gift; the other part the Son, and his reception of that gift.

First. For the gift of the Father there is to be considered, to wit:

The gift itself; and that is the gift of certain persons to the Son. The Father giveth, and that gift shall come: "And him that cometh." The gift then is of persons; the Father giveth persons to Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Next you have the Son's reception of this gift, and that sheweth itself in these particulars:

1. In his hearty acknowledgment of it to be a gift: "The Father giveth me."

2. In his taking notice, after a solemn manner, of *all* and every part of the gift: "All that the Father giveth me."

3. In this resolution to bring them to himself: "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me."

4. And in his determining, that not anything shall make him dislike them in their coming: "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

These things might be spoken to at large, as they are in this method presented to view: But I shall choose to speak the words,

1. By way of explication.

2. By way of observation.

First, By way of explication, "All that the Father giveth me." This word *ALL*, is often used in scripture, and is to be taken more largely, or more strictly, even as the truth or argument for the sake of which it is made use of, will bear. Wherefore, that we may better understand the mind of Christ, in the use of it here, we must consider, that it is limited and restrained only to those that shall be saved, to wit, to those that shall come to Christ; even to those whom he will "in no wise cast out." Thus, also the words, "all Israel," is sometimes to be taken; though sometimes it is taken for the whole family of Jacob. And so "all Israel shall be saved." (Rom. xi.) By "all Israel," here, he intendeth not all Israel, in the largest sense; for they are not all Israel which are of Israel; "neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called: that is, They who are the children of the flesh; these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for their seed." (Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8.)

This word *all*, therefore, must be limited and enlarged, as the truth and argument for the sake of which it is used, will bear; else we shall abuse scriptures and readers, and ourselves, and all. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth," said Christ, "will draw all men after me." (John xii. 32.) Can any one imagine, that by all, in this place, he should mean all and every individual man in the world, and not rather that all that is consonant to the scope of the place? And if, by being "lifted up from the earth," he means, as he should seem, his being taken up into heaven; and if, by "drawing all men after him," he meant a drawing them into the place of glory; then must he mean by all men, those, and only those, that shall in truth be eternally saved from the wrath to come: "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." (Rom. xi. 32.) Here again you have *all* and *all*, two *alls*: but yet a greater disparity between the all made mention of in the first place, and that all made mention of in the second. Those intended in this text are the Jews, even all of them, by the first all that you find in the words. The second all, doth also intend the same people; but yet only so many of them as God will have mercy upon. "He hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have



mercy upon all." The all also in the text, is likewise to be limited to be saved, and them only. But again;

The word *giveth*, or *hath given*, must be restrained, after the same manner, to the same limited number: "all that the Father giveth me." Not all that are given, if you take the gift of the Father to the Son, in the largest sense; for in that sense there are many given to him that shall never come unto him: yea, many were given unto him, that *he will cast out*. I shall therefore first show you the truth of this, and then in what sense the gift in the text must be taken.

First, That all that are given to Christ, if you take the gift of the Father to him, in the largest sense, cannot be intended in the text, is evident.

1. Because then all the men, yea, all the things in the world, must be saved. "All things," said he, "are delivered unto me by the Father." (Matt. xi. 27.) This, I think, no rational man in the world will conclude: Therefore the *gift* intended in the text, must be restrained to some; to a *gift* that is given by way of speciality by the Father to the Son.

2. It must not be taken for *all*, that in any sense are given by the Father to him, because the Father hath given some, yea, many, to him, to be dashed in pieces by him. "Ask of me," said the Father to him, "and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." But what must be done with them? must he save them all? No; "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps. ii.) This method he useth not with them that he saved by his grace, but those that himself and saints shall rule over in justice and severity. (Rev. ii. 26, 27:) yet, as you see, they are given to him; therefore the gift intended in the text, must be restrained to some, to a *gift* that is given by way of *speciality* by the Father to the Son.

In Psalm xi. he saith plainly, that some are given to him that he might destroy them: "Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me." (v. 40.) Those therefore, cannot be of the number of those that are said to be given in the text; for those, even all of them, shall come to him, and *he will in no wise cast out*.

3. Some are given to Christ, that he by them might bring about some of his high and deep designs in the world. Thus Judas was given to Christ, to wit, that by him, even as he was determined before, he might bring about his death, and so the salvation of his elect by his blood. Yea, and Judas must so manage this business,

as that he must lose himself for ever in bringing it to pass. Therefore the Lord Jesus, even his losing of Judas, applies himself to the judgment of his Father, if he had not in that thing done that which was right, even in suffering of Judas so to bring about his master's death, as that he might by so doing bring about his own eternal damnation also.

"Those" said he, "that thou gavest me, have I kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scriptures might be fulfilled." (John xvii. 12.) Let us then grant that Judas was given to Christ, but not as those made mention of in the text; for then he should not have failed to have been so received by Christ, and kept to eternal life. Indeed he was given to Christ; but he was given to him to lose him, in the way that I have mentioned before; he was given to Christ, that he by him might bring about his own death, as was before determined; and that in the overthrow of him that did it. Yea, he must bring about his dying for us in the loss of the instrument that betrayed him, that he might even fulfil the scripture in his destruction, as well as in the salvation of the rest. "And none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled."

The gift therefore in the text must not be taken in the largest sense, but even as the words will bear, to wit, for such a gift as he accepteth, and promiseth to be an effectual means of eternal salvation too. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Mark! They shall come that are special given unto me; and they shall by no means be rejected: For this is the substance of the text.

Those, therefore, intended as the gift in the text, are those that are given by covenant to the Son; those that in other places are called the *elect*, the *chosen*, the *sheep*, and the *children of the promise*, &c.

These be they that the Father hath given to Christ to keep them; those that Christ hath promised eternal life unto; those to whom he hath given his word, and that he will have with him in his kingdom to behold his glory.

"This is the will of the Father that hath sent me, that of all he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father that gave them me, is greater than all: And no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. Thine

they were and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word ; I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for those that thou hast given me ; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine : and I am glorified in them."

"Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. Father I will, that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me ; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John ii. 39: chap. x. 58; and chap. xvii. 1, 6, 9, 10, 24.)

All these sentences are of the same import with the text ; and the *alls* and the *many, those, they, &c.* in these several sayings of Christ, are the same with *all the given* in the text ; "All that the Father giveth."

So that, as I said before, the word *all*, as also other words, must not be taken in such sort as our foolish fancies or groundless opinions will prompt us to, but do admit of an enlargement or a restriction, according to the true meaning and intent of the text. We must therefore diligently consult the meaning of the text, by comparing it with the other sayings of God ; so shall we be better able to find out the mind of the Lord, in the word which he has given us to know it by.

"All that the Father giveth."—By this word *Father*, Christ describeth the person giving : by which we may learn several useful things : 1. That the Lord God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is concerned with the Son in the salvation of his people. True, his acts, to our salvation, are diverse from those of the Son ; he was not capable of doing that, or those things for us, as did the Son ; he died not, he spilt not blood for our redemption, as the Son ; but yet he hath a hand, a great hand in our salvation too. As Christ saith, The Father himself loveth you," and his love is manifest in choosing of us, in giving of us to his Son ; yea, and in giving his Son also to be a ransom for us. Hence he is called, "The Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort." For even the Father hath himself found out, and made way for his grace to come to us through the sides, and the heart-blood of his well beloved Son. (Col. i. 12.) The Father therefore is to be remembered and adored as one having a chief hand in the salvation of sinners. "We ought to give thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ; for the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. (Col. i. 12. 1 John iv. 14.) As also we see in

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the text, the *Father giveth* the sinner to save him.

2. Christ Jesus the Lord, by this word *Father*, would familiarize this giver to us. Naturally the name of God is dreadful to us, especially when he is discovered to us by those names that declare his justice, holiness, power and glory ; but now this word *Father* is a familiar word, it frighteth not the sinner, but rather inclineth his heart to love, and be pleased with the remembrance of him. Hence Christ also, when he would have us to pray with Godly boldness, puts this word *Father* into our mouths, saying, when ye pray, "Our Father which art in heaven ;" concluding thereby, that by the familiarity that by such a word is intimated, the children of God may take more boldness to pray for, and ask great things. I myself have often found, that when I can say but this word *Father*, it doth me more good than if I called by any other scripture name. It is worth your noting, that to call God by his relative title, was rare among the saints in Old-Testament times. Seldom do you find him called by this name, no, sometimes not in three or four books ; but now in New-Testament times, he is called by no name so often as this, both by the Lord Jesus himself, and by the apostles afterwards. Indeed the Lord Jesus was he that first made this name common among the saints, and that taught them, both in their discourses, their prayers, and in their writings, so much to use it ; it being more pleasing to, and discovering more plainly our interest in God, than any other expression ; for by this one name we are made to understand that all our mercies are the offspring of God, and that we also that are called, are his children by adoption.

"All that the Father giveth.—This word *giveth* is out of Christ's ordinary dialect, and seemeth to intimate, at the first sound, as if the Father's gift to the Son was not an act that is past, but one that is present and continuing ; when indeed this gift was bestowed upon Christ when the covenant, the eternal covenant, was made between them before all worlds. Wherefore, in those in other places, when this gift is mentioned, it is still spoken of as an act that is past : As, *All that he hath given me ; to as many as thou hast given me : thou gavest them me, and these which thou hast given me.* Therefore of necessity this must be the first and chief sense of the text ; I mean of this *giveth*, otherwise the doctrine of election, and of the eternal covenant which was made between the Father and the Son, (in which covenant this gift of the Father is most certainly comprised,) will be shaken, or at leastwise questionable by



erroneous and wicked men: for they may say, that the Father gave not all those to Christ that shall be saved, before the world was made; for that this act of giving is an act of continuation.

But again, this word *giveth* is not to be rejected; for it hath its proper use, and may signify to us,

1. That though the act of giving among men doth admit of the time past, or the time to come, and is to be spoken of with reference to such time; yet with God it is not so. Things past, or things to come are always present with God, and with his Son Jesus Christ: "He calleth things that are not" that is, to us, "as though they were." And again, "Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world." All things to God are present, and so the gift of the Father to the Son, although to us, as is manifest by the word, it is an act that is past, (Rom. iv. 17. Acts xv. 10.)

2. Christ may express himself thus, to show, that the Father hath not only given him this portion in the lump, before the world was, but that those that he had so given, he will give him again; that is, will bring them to him at the time of their conversion; for "the Father bringeth them to Christ." (John vi. 44.)

As it is said, "She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work;" that is, in the righteousness of Christ; for it is God imputeth that to those that are saved. (Psalm xlv. 14; 1 Cor. i.)

A man giveth his daughter to such a man, first in order to marriage, and this respects the time past; and he giveth her again at the day appointed in marriage: And in this last sense, perhaps, the text may have a meaning; that is, that all that the Father hath (before the world was) given to Jesus Christ, he giveth them again to him, in the day of their espousals.

Things that are given among men, are oft-times best at first, to wit, when they are new; and the reason is, because all earthly things wax old: but with Christ it is not so: This gift of the Father is not an old and deformed, and unpleasant in his eyes; and therefore to him it is always new. When the Lord spake of giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites, he saith not, that he had given, or would give it to them, but thus: "The Lord thy God giveth thee this land." (Deut. xi. 13.) Not but that he had given it to them, while they were in the loins of their fathers, hundreds of years before. Yet he saith *now* he *giveth* it to them; as if they were now also in the very act of taking possession, when as yet they were on the other side of Jordan. What then should be the meaning? Why, I take it to be this: That the

land should be to them always as new; as new as if they were taking possession therefore but now. And so is the gift of the Father mentioned in the text to the Son; it is always new, as if it were always new.

"All that the Father giveth me." In these words you find mention made of two persons, the Father and the Son: the Father giving, and the Son receiving or accepting of this gift. This then, in the first place, clearly demonstrateth, that the Father and the Son, though they, with the Holy Ghost, are one and the same eternal God; yet as to their personality, are distinct. The Father is one, the Holy Spirit is one. But because there is in this text mention made but of two of the three, therefore a word about these two. The giver and receiver cannot be the same person in a proper sense, in the same act of giving and receiving. He that giveth, giveth not to himself but to another: the Father giveth not to the Father, to wit, to himself, but to the Son; the Son receiveth not of the Son, to wit, of himself, but of the Father; so when the Father giveth commandment, he giveth it not to himself, but to another; as Christ saith, He hath given me a commandment, (John xii. 49.) So again, "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me."

Further, here is something implied that is not expressed, to wit, that the Father hath not given all men to Christ; that is, in that sense as is intended in the text, though in a larger, as was said before, he hath given him every one of them; for then all should be saved; he hath therefore disposed of some another way. He gives some up to idolatry; he gives some up to uncleanness, to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind. Now these he disposeth of in his anger, for their destruction, (Acts vii. 42. Rom. i. 24, 26, 28,) that they may reap the fruit of their doings, and be filled with the reward of their own ways. But neither hath he thus disposed of all men; he hath even of mercy reserved some from thy judgments, and those are they that he will pardon, as he saith "For I will pardon them whom I reserve." (Jer. i. 20.) Now these he hath given to Jesus Christ by will, as a legacy and portion. Hence the Lord Jesus says, "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

The Father therefore, in giving of them to him to save them, must needs declare unto us these following things:

1. That he is able to answer this design of God, viz. to save them to the uttermost sin, the uttermost temptation, &c. (Heb.

vii. 25.) Hence he is said to "lay help on that that is mighty, mighty to save;" and hence it is again, that God did even of old promise to send his people a Saviour, a great one. (Psalm lxxxix. 19. Isa. lxiii. 1.) To save is a great work, and calls for Almighty in the undertaker; hence he is called the "Mighty God, the Wonderful Counsellor," &c. Sin is strong, Satan is also strong, death and the grave are strong, and so is the curse of the law; therefore it follows, that this Jesus must needs be by God the Father accounted almighty, in that he hath given his elect to him to save them, and deliver them from these, and that in despite of all their force and power.

And he gave us testimony of this his might, when he was employed in that part of our deliverance that called for a declaration of it. He abolished death; he destroyed him that had the power of death; he had finished sin, and made an end of it, as to its damning effect upon the persons that the Father hath given him; he hath vanquished the curse of the law, nailed it to his cross, and made a show of these things openly, (2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. ii. 14, 15; Hos. xiii. 14; Dan. ix. 24; Gal. iii. 13; Col. ii. 14, 15.)

Yea, and even now, as a sign of his triumph and conquest, he is alive from the dead, and hath the keys of hell and death in his own keeping, (Rev. i. 18.)

2. The Father's giving of them to him to save them, declares unto them that he is and will be faithful in his office of Mediator, and that therefore they shall be secured from the fruit and wages of their sins which is eternal damnation, by his faithful execution of it. And indeed it is said, even by the Holy Ghost himself, "That he is faithful to him that appointed him;" that is, to this work of saving those that the Father hath given him for that purpose; as "Moses was faithful in all his house." Yea, and more faithful too; for Moses was faithful in God's house, but as a servant; "but Christ as a Son over his own house." (Heb. iii.)

And therefore this man is counted worthy of more glory than Moses, even upon this account, because more faithful than he, as well as because of the dignity of his person. Therefore in him, and in his truths and faithfulness, God rested well pleased, and put all the government of his people upon his shoulders. Knowing, that nothing shall be wanting in him, that may any way perfect the design. And of this he, to wit, the Son, hath already given a proof: For when the time was come, that his blood was by divine justice required for their redemption, washing, and cleansing, he as freely poured it out of his heart as

if it had been water out of a vessel; not sticking to part with his own life, that the life which was laid up for his people in heaven might not fail to be bestowed on them. And upon this account, as well as upon any other, it is that God calleth him the "righteous servant." (Isa. liii.) For his righteousness could never have been complete, if he had not been to the uttermost faithful to the work he undertook; it is also because he is faithful and true, that in righteousness he doth judge and make work for his people's deliverance. He will faithfully perform this trust reposed in him: The Father knows this, and hath therefore given his elect unto him.

3. The Father giving of them to him, to save them, declares that he is, and will be gentle and patient towards them, under all their provocations and miscarriages. It is not to be imagined, the trials and provocations that the Son of God hath all along had with these people that hath been given to him to save: indeed he is said to be a tried stone; for he has been tried, not only by the devil, guilt of sin, death, and the curse of the law, but also by his people's ignorance, unruliness, falls into sin, and declining to errors in life and doctrine. Were we but capable of seeing how the Lord Jesus had been tried even by his people, ever since there was one of them in the world, we should be amazed at his patience and gentle carriages to them. It is said, indeed, "The Lord is very pitiful, slow to anger, and of great mercy: and, indeed, if he had not been so, he could never have endured their manners as he has done from Adam hitherto. Therefore is his pity and bowels towards his church preferred above the pity and bowels of a mother towards her child. "Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet I will not forget thee, saith the Lord." (Isa. xlix. 15.)

God did once give Moses, as Christ's servant, a handful of his people, to carry them in his bosom, but no farther than from Egypt to Canaan; and this Moses, as is said of him by the Holy Ghost, was the meekest man that was then to be found on the earth; yea, and he loved the people at a very great rate; yet neither would his meekness nor love hold out in this work; he failed and grew passionate, even to provoking his God to anger under this work. "And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? But what was the affliction! Why, the Lord hath said unto him, "Carry this people in thy bosom as a nursing father beareth his sucking child, unto the land that he swore unto their fathers." And how



then? "Not I," says Moses, "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me: If thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness." (Numb. xi. 11, 12, 13, 14.) God gave them to Moses, that he might carry them in his bosom, that he might show gentleness and patience towards them, under all the provocations wherewith they would provoke him from that time till he had brought them to their land; but he failed in the work; he could not exercise it, because he had not that sufficiency of patience towards them: But now it is said of the person speaking in the text, "That he shall gather his lambs with his arm, and shall carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead them that are with young." (Isa. xl. 10, 11;) intimating that this was one of the qualifications that God looked for, and knew was in him, when he gave his elect to him to save them.

4. The Father giving of them to him to save them, declares that he hath a sufficiency of wisdom to wage with all those difficulties that would attend him in his bringing of his sons and daughters unto glory. (1 Cor. i. 30.) "He hath made him to us to be wisdom;" yea, he is called wisdom itself. And God said moreover, That "he shall deal prudently." (Isa. lii. 13.) And, indeed, he that shall take upon him to be the Saviour of the people, had need be wise, because their adversaries are subtle above any. Here they are to encounter with the serpent, who for his subtlety outwitted our father and mother, when their wisdom was at the highest. (Gen. iii.) But if we talk of wisdom, our Jesus is wise, wiser than Solomon, wiser than all men, wiser than all angels; he is even the wisdom of God. *Christ is the wisdom of God.* (Col. i. 1.) And hence it is that he turneth sin, temptations, persecutions, falls, and all things, for good unto his people. (Rom. viii.)

Now these things thus concluded on, do show us also the great and wonderful love of the Father, in that he should choose out one every way so well prepared for the work of man's salvation.

Herein indeed perceive we the love of God. Hiram gathered, that God loved Israel, because he had given them such a king as Solomon, (2 Chron. ii. 11;) but how much more may we behold the love that God hath bestowed upon us, in that he hath given us to his Son, and also given his Son for us.

"All that the Father giveth me" shall come. In these last words there is closely inserted an answer unto the Father's end in giving of his elect unto Jesus Christ.

The Father's end was, that they might come to him, and be saved by him; and that, says the Son, shall be done; neither sin nor Satan, neither flesh nor world, neither wisdom nor folly, shall hinder their coming to me. "They shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Here therefore the Lord Jesus positively determineth to put forth a sufficiency of all grace, as shall effectually perform his promise. "They shall come;" that is, he shall cause them to come, by infusing of an effectual blessing into all the means that shall be used to that end. As was said to the evil spirit that was sent to persuade Ahab to go and fall at Ramoth-Gilead; "Go: thou shalt persuade him and prevail also; go forth, and do so," (1 Kings, xxii. 22;) so will Jesus Christ say to the means that shall be used for the bringing of those to him that the Father hath given him. I say, he will bless it effectually to this very end; it shall persuade them, and shall prevail also; else, as I said, the Father's end would be frustrate; for the Father's will is, that "of all that he hath given him, he should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day;" in order next unto himself, Christ the first-fruits, afterwards those that are at his coming. (1 Cor. xv.) But this cannot be done, if there should fail to be a work of grace effectually wrought, though but in any one of them. But this shall not fail to be wrought in them, even in all the Father hath given him to save. "All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me," &c.

But to speak more distinctly to the words, "they shall come," two things I would show you from these words: 1. What it is to come to Christ. 2. What force there is in this promise, to make them come to him.

1st. I would show you what it is to come to Christ. This word *come* must be understood spiritually, not carnally; for many come to him carnally, or bodily, that had no saving advantage by him: multitudes did thus come unto him in the days of his flesh, yea, innumerable companies. There is also at this day a formal customary coming to his ordinances, and way of worship, which availeth not any thing; but with them I shall now meddle; for they are not intended in the text. The coming, then, intended in the text, is to be understood of the coming of the mind to him, even the moving of the heart towards him; I say the moving of the heart towards him, from a sound sense of the absolute want that a man hath of him for his justification and salvation.

This description of coming to Christ divideth itself into two heads: 1. That coming to Christ is a moving of the mind

towards him; 2. That it is a moving of the mind towards him, from a sound sense of the absolute want that a man hath of him for his justification and salvation.

To speak to the *first*, That it is a moving of the mind towards him. This is evident, because coming hither or thither, if it be voluntary, is by an act of the mind or will; so coming to Christ is through the inclining of the will. "Thy people shall be willing." Psal. cxl. 3. This willingness of heart it is which sets the mind a moving after, or towards him. The church expresseth this moving of her mind towards Christ, by the moving of her bowels. "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him." Song v. 4. "My bowels;" the passions of my mind and affections; which passions of the affections are expressed by the yearning and sounding of the bowels, the yearning and passionate working of them; the sounding of them, or their making a noise for him. Gen. xliii. 30; 1 Kings iii. 26; Isa. xvi. 11.

This then is the coming to Christ, even a moving towards him with the mind. "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth whithersoever the water shall come, shall live."

The water in this text is the grace of God in the doctrine of it. The living things are the children of men; to whom the grace of God, by the gospel, is preached. Now, saith he, "every living thing which moveth whithersoever the water shall come, shall live." And see how this word "moveth" is expounded by Christ himself, in the book of Revelation. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, (that is willing,) let him take of the water of life freely." Rev. xxii. 17.

So that to move in thy mind and will after Christ, is to be coming to him. There are many poor souls that are coming to Christ, that yet cannot tell how to believe it, because they think that coming to him is some strange and wonderful thing; and indeed so it is: but I mean, they overlook the inclination of their will, the moving of their mind, and the sounding of their howls after him; and count these none of this strange and wonderful thing; when indeed it is a work of the greatest wonder in this world, to see a man who is sometimes dead in sin, possessed of the devil, an enemy to Christ and all things spiritually good; I say, to see this man moving with his mind after the Lord Jesus Christ, is one of the highest wonders in the world.

2. It is moving of the mind towards him, from a sound sense of the absolute want that a man hath of him for his justification

and salvation. Indeed, without this sense of a lost condition without him, there will be no moving of the mind towards him: A moving of their mouth there may be; "With their mouth they show much love." Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Such a people as this will come as the true people cometh; that is, in show and outward appearance: And they will sit before God's ministers, as his people sit before them; and they will hear his words too, but they will not do them; that is, will not come inwardly with their minds: "For with their mouth they show much love, but their heart (or mind) goeth after their covetousness." Now all this, because they want an effectual sense of the misery of their state by nature; for not till they have that, will they in their mind move after him. Therefore, thus it is said concerning the true comers, "At that day the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts of the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in his holy mountain, at Jerusalem." Isa. xxvii. 13. They are then (as you see) the outcast, and those that are ready to perish, that indeed have their minds effectually moved to come to Jesus Christ. This sense of things was that which made the three thousand come, that made Saul come, that made the jailer come, and that indeed makes all others come, that come effectually. Acts ii. 2, 16.

Of the true coming to Christ, the three lepers were a famous semblance, of whom you read, 2 Kings vii. 3, &c. The famine in those days was sore in the land, there was no bread for the people; and as for that sustenance that was, which was asses' flesh, and doves' dung, that was only in Samaria; and of these the lepers had no share, for they were thrust without the city. Well, now they sat in the gate of the city, and the hunger was, as I may say, making his last meal of them; and being therefore half dead already, what do they think of doing? Why first, they display the dismal colors of death before each other's faces, and then resolve what to do, saying, "If we say we will go into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; if we sit still here we die also: Now therefore come, let us fall into the host of the Syrians, if they save us alive we shall live; if they kill us we shall but die." Here now was necessity at work, and this necessity drove them to go thither for life, whither else they would never have gone for it. Thus it is with them that in truth come to Jesus Christ: death is before them, they see it, and feel it; he is feeding upon them, and will eat them quite up, if they come not to Jesus Christ; and therefore they come, even of necessity, being forced there-



to by that sense they have of their being utterly and everlastingly undone, if they find not safety in him.

These are they that will come: Indeed, these are they that are invited to come. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28.

Take two or three things to make this more plain; to wit, That coming to Christ floweth from a sound sense of the absolute need that a man hath of him, as afore.

1. "They shall come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them; I will cause them to walk by rivers of waters in a plain way wherein they shall not stumble." Jer. xxxi. 9. Mind it! they come with weeping and supplication; they come with prayers and tears. Now prayers and tears are the effects of a right sense of the need of mercy. Thus a senseless sinner cannot come, he cannot pray, he cannot cry, he cannot come sensible of what he sees not, nor feels. "In those days, and at that time, the children of Israel shall come; they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall seek the Lord their God; they shall ask their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Jer. l. 4, 5.

2. This coming to Christ, it is called a running to him, a flying to him; a flying to him from wrath to come. By all which terms is set forth the sense of the man that comes; to wit, That he is affected with the sense of his sin, and the death due thereto; that he is sensible that the avenger of blood pursues him; and that therefore he is cut off, if he makes not speed to the Son of God for life. Matt. iii. 7; Ps. cxliii. 9. Flying is the last work of a man in danger; all that hear of danger do not fly; no, not all that see themselves in danger; all that hear of danger will not fly. Men will consider if there be no other way of escape before they fly. Therefore, as I said, flying is the last thing. When all refuge fails, and a man is made to see that there is nothing left him but sin, death, and damnation, unless he flies to Christ for life; then he flies, and not till then.

3. That the true coming is from a sense of an absolute need of Jesus Christ to save, &c. is evident by the outcry that is made by them to come, even as they are coming to him. Matt. xiv. 30; Acts ii. 37; Acts xvi. 30. "Lord save me, or I perish;" "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and the like. This language doth sufficiently discover that the truly-coming souls are souls sensible of their need of salvation by Jesus Christ; and moreover, that there

is nothing else that can help them but Christ.

4. It is yet farther evident by these few things that follow: It is said, that such are pricked in their hearts, that is, with the sentence of death by the law; and the least prick in heart kills a man. Acts ii. 37. Such are said, as I said before, to weep, to tremble, and to be astonished in themselves at the evident and unavoidable danger that attends them, unless they fly to Jesus Christ. Acts ix. 16.

5. Coming to Christ is attended with an honest and sincere forsaking all for him. "If any man come unto me and hateth not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple; and whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke xiv. 26, 27.

By these and the like expressions elsewhere, Christ describeth the true comer, or the man that indeed is coming to him; he is one that casteth all behind his back; he leaveth all, he forsaketh all, he hateth all things that would stand in his way to hinder his coming to Jesus Christ. There are a great many pretended comers to Jesus Christ in the world. And they are much like to the man you read of in Matt. xxi. 30, that said to his Father's bidding, "I go, Sir, and went not." I say, there are a great many such comers to Jesus Christ; they say, when Christ calls by his gospel, I come, Sir; but still they abide by their pleasure and carnal delights. They come not at all, only they give him a courtly compliment; but he takes notice of it, and will not let it pass for any more than a lie; he said, "I go, Sir, and went not," he dissembled and lied. Take heed of this, you that flatter yourselves with your own deceivings. Words will not do with Jesus Christ: Coming is coming, and nothing else will go for coming with him.

Before I speak to the other head, I shall answer some objections that usually lie in the way of those that in truth are coming to Jesus Christ.

*Objection 1.* Though I cannot deny, but my mind runs after Christ, and that too as being moved thereto from a sight and consideration of my lost condition, for I see without him I perish, yet I fear my ends are not right in coming to him.

*Question.* Why, what is thine end in coming to Christ?

*Answer.* My end is, that I might have life, and be saved by Jesus Christ.

This is the objection; well, let me tell thee, that to come to Christ for life, and to be saved, although at present thou hast no other end, is a lawful and good coming to Jesus Christ. This is evident, because

Christ propoundeth life as the only argument to prevail with sinners to come to him, and so also blameth them because they come not to him for life. "And ye will not come to me that ye might have life," (John v. 3.) Besides there are many other scriptures whereby he allureth sinners to come to him, in which he propoundeth nothing to them but their safety. As, "He that believeth in him shall not perish;" "he that believeth is passed from death to life;" "He that believeth shall be saved;" "he that believeth on him is not condemned." And believing and coming are all one. So that you see to come to Christ for life, is a lawful coming and good.

In that he believeth, that he alone hath made atonement for sin. Rom. ii.

And let me add over and above, that for a man to come to Christ for life, though he come to him for nothing else but life, it is to give much honor to him.

1st. He honoreth the word of Christ, and consenteth to the truth of it; and that in these two general heads.

1. He consenteth to the truth of all those sayings that testify, that sin is most abominable in itself, dishonorable to God, and damnable to the soul of man; for thus saith the man that cometh to Jesus Christ. Jer. xlv. 4; Rom. ii. 23; chap. vi. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 12.

2. In that he believeth, as the word hath said, that there is in the world's best things, righteousness and all, nothing but death and damnation; for so also says the man that comes to Jesus Christ for life. Rom. vii. 24, 25; chap. viii. 2, 3; 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 8.

2dly. He honoreth Christ's person, in that he believeth that there is life in him, and that he is able to save him from death, hell, the devil, and damnation; for unless a man believes this, he will not come to Christ for life. Heb. vii. 24, 25.

3dly. He honoreth him, in that he believeth that he is authorized of the Father to give life to those that come to him for it. John v. 11, 12; chap. xvii. 1, 2.

4thly. He honoreth the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

1. In that he believeth that Christ hath more power to save from sin by the sacrifice that he hath offered for it, than hath all law, devils, death, or sin, to condemn: He that believes not this, will not come to Jesus Christ for life. Acts xiii. 33; Heb. ii. 14, 15; Rev. i. 17, 18.

2. In that he believeth that Christ according to his office, will be most faithful and merciful in the discharge of his office.

This must be included in the faith of him that comes for life to Jesus Christ. 1 John ii. 1, 2, 3; Heb. ii. 17, 18.

5thly. Further, He that cometh to Jesus Christ for life, taketh part with him against

sin, and against the ragged and imperfect righteousness of the world! yea, and against false Christs, and damnable errors, that set themselves against the worthiness of his merits and sufficiency. This is evident, for that such a soul singlenth Christ from them all, as the only one that can save.

6thly. Therefore as Noah, at God's command, thou preparest this ark, for the saving of thyself, by which also thou condemnest the world, and art become heir of the righteousness which is by faith, (Heb. xi. 7,) wherefore coming sinner be content; he that cometh to Jesus Christ believeth too that he is willing to show mercy to, and have compassion upon him (though unworthy) that comes to him for life. And therefore thy soul lieth not only under a special invitation to come, but under a promise too of being accepted and forgiven. Matt. xi. 28.

All these particular parts and qualities of faith, are in that soul that comes to Jesus Christ for life, as is evident to any indifferent judgment.

For, will he that believeth not the testimony of Christ concerning the baseness of sin, and the insufficiency of the righteousness of the world, come to Christ for life? No.

He that believeth not the testimony of the word comes not; he that believeth that there is life any where else, comes not; he that questions whether the Father hath given Christ power to forgive, comes not: he that thinketh that there is more in sin, in the law, in death, and the devil, to destroy, than there is in Christ to save, comes not: he also that questions his faithful management of priesthood for the salvation of sinners, comes not.

Thou, then, that art indeed the coming sinner, believest thou this? True, perhaps thou dost not believe with that assurance, nor hast thou leisure to take notice of thy faith as to these distinct acts of it; but yet all this faith is in him coming to Christ for life. And the faith that thus worketh, is the faith of the best and purest kind; because this man comes alone as a sinner, and as seeing that life is to be had only in Jesus Christ.

Before I conclude my answer to this objection, take into thy consideration these two things:

1st. That the cities of refuge were erected for those that were dead in the law, and that yet would live by grace, even for those that were to fly thither for life from the avenger of blood that pursueth after them. And it is worth your noting, that those that were upon their flight thither, are in a peculiar manner called the people of God. "Cast ye up, cast ye up, (saith God,) prepare ye the way; take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people." Isa. lvii. 14.



This is meant of preparing the way to the city of refuge, that the slayers might escape thither; which flying slayers are here, by way of speciality, called the people of God; even those of them that escaped thither for life.

2dly. Consider that of Ahab, when Benhadad sent to him for life, saying, "Thus saith thy servant Benhadad, I pray thee let me live." Though Benhadad had sought the crown, kingdom, yea, and also the life of Ahab, yet how effectually doth Benhadad prevail with him! Is Benhadad yet alive? saith Ahab, He is my brother; yea, "go ye, bring him to me: So he made him ride in his chariot." 1 Kings xx.

Coming sinner, what thinkest thou? If Jesus Christ had as little goodness in him as Ahab, he might grant an humble Benhadad life; thou neither begetteth of him his crown and dignity; life, eternal life will serve thy turn. How much more then shalt thou have it, since thou hast to deal with him who is goodness and mercy itself! yea, since thou art also called upon, yea, greatly encouraged by a promise of life, to come unto him for life! Read also these scriptures, Numb. xxxv. 11, 14, 15; Josh. xx. 1—6.; Heb. vi. 16, 21.

*Objection 2.* When I say I only seek myself, I mean I do not find that I do design God's glory in mine own salvation by Christ, and that makes me fear I do not come aright.

*Answer.* Where doth Christ Jesus require such a qualification of those that are coming to him for life? Come thou for life, and trouble not thy head with such objections against thyself; and let God and Christ alone to glorify themselves in the salvation of such a worm as thou art. The Father saith to the Son, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." God propoundeth life to sinners, as the argument to prevail with them to come to him for life; and Christ says plainly, "I am come that ye might have life." John xii. 10. He hath no need of thy designs, though thou hast need of his eternal life, pardon of sin, and deliverance from wrath to come; Christ propounds these to thee, and these be the things that thou hast need of: besides, God will be gracious and merciful to worthless, undeserving wretches; come then as such an one, and lay no stumbling-block in the way to him, but come to him for life, and live. John v. 34; chap. x. 10; and chap. iii. 36; Matt. i. 21; Prov. viii. 36, 37; 1 Thes. xi; John xi. 25, 26.

When the gaoler said, "Sirs, What must I do to be saved?" Paul did not so much as once ask him, what is your end in this question; do you design the glory of God in the salvation of your soul? He had more wit: he knew that such questions as these

would have been but fools' baubles, about instead of a sufficient salve to so weighty a question as this. Wherefore, since this poor wretch lacked salvation by Jesus Christ, I mean to be saved from hell and death, which he knew (now) was due to him for the sins that he had committed, Paul bids him, like a poor condemned sinner as he was, to proceed still in this his way of self-seeking, saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts xvi. 30, 31, 32. I know that afterwards thou wilt desire to glorify Christ by walking in the way of his precepts; but at present thou wantest life: the avenger of blood is behind thee, and the devil like a roaring lion is behind thee; well, come now, and obtain life from these; and when thou hast obtained some comfortable persuasion that thou art made partaker of life by Christ, then, and not till then, thou wilt say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." Ps. ciii. 1—6.

*Objection 3.* But I cannot believe that I am come to Christ aright, because sometimes I am apt to question his very being and office to save.

Thus to do is horrible; but mayest thou not judge amiss in this matter?

How can I judge amiss, when I judge as I feel? Poor soul! Thou mayest judge amiss for all that. Why, saith the sinner, I think that these questionings come from my heart.

*Answer.* Let me answer: That which comes from thy heart, comes from thy will and affections, from thy understanding, judgment, and conscience, for these must acquiesce in thy questioning, if thy questioning be with thy heart. And how sayest thou, (for to name no more,) dost thou with the affection and conscience thus question?

*Answer.* No, my conscience trembles when such thoughts come into my mind; and my affections are otherwise inclined.

Then I conclude, that these things are either suddenly injected by the devil, or else are the fruits of that body of sin and death that yet dwells within thee, or perhaps from both together.

If they come wholly from the devil, as they seem, because thy conscience and affections are against them, or if they come from that body of death that is in thee, (and be not thou curious in inquiring from which of them they come, the safest way is to lay enough at thy own door,) nothing of this should hinder thy coming, nor make thee conclude thou comest not aright.

And before I leave thee, let me a little query with thee about this matter.

*1st.* Dost thou like these wicked blasphemies?

*Answer.* No, no; their presence and working kills me.

*2dly.* Dost thou mourn for them, pray against them, and hate thyself because of them?

*Answer.* Yes, yes; but that which afflicts me is, I do not prevail against them.

*3dly.* Dost thou sincerely choose (mightest thou have thy choice) that thy heart might be affected and taken with the things that are best, most heavenly, and holy?

*Answer.* With all my heart, and death the next hour (if it were God's will,) rather than thus to sin against him.

Well then, thy not liking of them, thy mourning for them, thy praying against them, and thy loathing thyself because of them, with thy sincere choosing of those thoughts for thy declaration that are heavenly and holy, clearly declares, that these things are not countenanced either with thy will, affections, understanding, judgment, or conscience: and so, that thy heart is not in them, but that rather they come immediately from the devil, or arise from the body of death that is in thy flesh, which thou oughtest thus to say, "Now then it is no more I that doth it, but sin that dwells in me." Rom. vii. 16, 17.

I will give thee a pertinent instance: In Deut. xxii. thou mayest read of a betrothed damsel, one betrothed to her beloved, one that had given him her heart and mouth, as thou hast given thyself to Christ; yet she was met with as she walked in the field, by one that forced her, because he was stronger than she. Well, what judgment now doth God, the righteous judge, pass upon the damsel for this? "The man only that lay with her," saith God, "shall die: But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death. For, as when a man rises against his neighbor, and slayeth him, even so is this matter; he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her."

Thou art this damsel: The man that forced thee with these blasphemous thoughts, is the devil; and he lighteth upon thee in a fit place, even in the fields as thou art wandering after Jesus Christ; but thou criest out, and by thy cry didst show, that thou abhorrest such wicked lewdness. Well, the Judge of all the earth will do right: he will not lay the sin at thy door, but at his that offered the violence; and for thy comfort take this into consideration, that he "comes to heal them that were oppressed of the devil."

*Objection 4.* But saith another, I am so

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heartless, so slow, and, as I think, so indifferent in my coming, that, to speak the truth, I know not whether my kind of coming ought to be called a coming to Christ.

*Answer.* You know that I told you at first, that coming to Christ is a moving of the heart and affections towards him.

But, saith the soul, my dulness and indifference in all holy duties, demonstrate my heartlessness in coming; and to come, and not with the heart, signifies nothing at all.

*Answer.* The moving of the heart after Christ, is not to be discerned (at all times) by thy sensible affectionate performance of duties, but rather by those secret groanings and complaints which thy soul makes to God against that sloth that attends thee in duties.

*2dly.* But grant it be even as thou sayest it is, that thou comest so slowly, &c. yet since Christ bids them come that come not at all, surely they may be accepted that come, though attended with those infirmities, which thou at present groanest under. He saith, "And him that cometh;" he saith not, "If they come sensible, so fast; but, "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." He saith also in 9th of Proverbs, "As for him that wanteth understanding," that is, a heart; for oftentimes the understanding is taken for the heart: "Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled."

*3dly.* Thou mayest be vehement in thy spirit in coming to Jesus Christ, and yet be plagued with sensible sloth; so was the church, when she cried, "Draw me, we run after thee;" and Paul, when he said, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." The works, strugglings, and oppositions of the flesh, are more manifest than are the works of the Spirit in our hearts, and so are sooner felt than they. What then? Let us not be discouraged at the sight and feeling of our own infirmities, but run the faster to Jesus Christ for salvation.

*4thly.* Get thy heart warmed with the sweet promise of Christ's acceptance of the coming sinner, and that will make thee more haste unto him. Discouraging thoughts, they are like unto cold water, they benumb the senses, and make us go ungainly about our business; but the sweet and warm gleads of promise, are like the comfortable beams of the sun, which enliveneth and refresheth. You see how little the bee and the fly do play in the air in winter; why? the cold hinders them from doing it; but when the wind and sun is warm, who is so busy as they?

*5thly.* But again, he that comes to Christ, flies for his life. Now, there is no man that flies for his life, that thinks he speeds fast enough on his journey; no, could he, he



would willingly take a mile at a step. Oh my sloth and heartlessness, sayest thou! "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest! I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."

Poor coming soul, thou art like the man that would ride full gallop, whose horse will hardly trot! Now, the desire of his mind is not to be judged of by the slow pace of the dull jade he rides on, but by the hitching, and kicking, and spurring, as he sits on his back. Thy flesh is like this dull jade, it will not gallop after Christ, it will be backward, though thy soul and heaven lie at stake. But be of good comfort: Christ judgeth not according to the fierceness of outward motion, but according to the sincerity of the heart and inward parts.

6thly. Ziba in appearance came to David much faster than did Mephibosheth; but yet his heart was not so upright in him to David as was his. It is true, Mephibosheth had a check from David; for said he, "Why wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?" But when David came to remember that Mephibosheth was lame, (for that was his plea,) "thy servant is lame," he was content, and concluded, he would have come after him faster than he did; and Mephibosheth appealed to David, who was in those days an angel of God, to know all things that are done in the earth, if he did not believe that the reason of his backwardness lay in his lameness, and not in his mind. Why, poor coming sinner, thou canst not come to Christ with that outward swiftness of career as many others do; but doth the reason of thy backwardness lie in thy mind and will, or in the sluggishness of the flesh? canst thou say sincerely, "The Spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak?" Yea, canst thou appeal to the Lord Jesus, who knoweth perfectly the very inmost thought of thy heart, that this is true? Then take this for thy comfort, he hath said, "I will assemble her that halteth, I will make her that halteth a remnant, and I will save her that halteth." What canst thou have more from the sweet lips of the Son of God? But,

7thly. I read of some that are to follow Christ in chains; I say to come after him in chains; "Thus saith the Lord, the labor of Egypt, and the merchandize of Ethiopia, and the Sabaeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine; they shall come after thee; In chains shall they come over, and they shall fall down unto thee: They shall make supplication unto thee saying, Surely there is none else to save." Isa. xl. 14. Surely they that come after Christ in chains, come to him in great difficulty, because their steps by the chains are straitened.

And what chain so heavy, as those that

discourage thee? Thy chain, which is made of guilt and filth, is heavy; it is a wretched band about thy neck, by which thy strength doth fail. Lam. i. 14; iii. 17. But come, though thou comest in chains; it is glory to Christ that a sinner come after him in chains. The chinking of thy chains, though troublesome to thee, are not, nor can be obstruction to thy salvation; it is Christ's work and glory to save thee from thy chains, to enlarge thy steps, and set thee at liberty. The blind man, though called, surely could not come apace to Jesus Christ, but Christ could stand still, and stay for him. True, "He rideth upon the wings of the wind;" but yet he is long-suffering and his long-suffering is salvation to him that cometh to him.

8thly. Hadst thou seen those that came to the Lord Jesus in the days of his flesh, how slowly, how hobblingly, they came to him, by reason of their infirmities; and also how friendly, and kindly, and graciously, he received them, and gave them the desire of their hearts, thou wouldest not, as thou dost, make such objections against thyself, in thy coming to Jesus Christ.

Objection 5. But (says another) I fear I come too late; I doubt I have staid too long; I am afraid the door is shut.

Answer. Thou canst never come too late to Jesus Christ, if thou dost come. This is manifest by two instances.

1st. By the man that came to him at the eleventh hour. This man was idle all the day long; he had a whole gospel-day to come in, and he played it all away save only the last hour thereof; but at last, at the eleventh hour, he came, and went into the vineyard to work with the rest of his laborers, that had borne the burden and heat of the day. Well, but how was he received by the lord of the vineyard? Why, when pay-day came, he had even as much as the rest; yea, had money first. True, the others murmured at him; but what did the Lord Jesus answer them? "Is thine eye evil because mine is good? I will give unto this last even as unto thee."

2dly. The other instance is, the thief upon the cross; he came late also, even as at an hour before his death; yea, he strayed from Jesus Christ as long as he had liberty to be a thief, and longer too; for could he have deluded the judge, and by lying words escaped his just condemnation, for ought I know, he had not come as yet to his Saviour: but being convicted, and condemned to die, yea, fastened to the cross, that he might die like a rogue, as he was in his life; behold the Lord Jesus, when this wicked one, even now, desireth mercy at his hands, tells him, and that without the least reflection upon him, for his former misspent life, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

Let no man turn the grace of God into wantonness. My design is now to encourage the coming soul.

*Objection.* But is not the door of mercy shut against some before they die?

*Answer.* Yea; and God forbids that prayers should be made to him for them. Jer vii. 16; Jude 22.

*Question.* Then why may not I doubt that I may be one of these?

*Answer.* By no means, if thou art coming to Jesus Christ; because when God shuts the door upon men, he gives them no heart to come to Jesus Christ. "None come but those to whom it is given of the Father." But thou comest; therefore it is given to thee of the Father.

Be sure, therefore, if the Father hath given thee a heart to come to Jesus Christ, the gate of mercy yet stands open to thee; for it stands not with the wisdom of God "to give strength to come to the birth, and yet to shut up the womb," (Isa. lvi. 9,) to give grace to come to Jesus Christ, and yet shut up the door of his mercy upon thee. "Incline thine ear," saith he, "and come unto me. Hear, and your souls shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa. lv. 3.

*Objection.* But it is said, that some knocked when the door was shut?

*Answer.* Yes; but the texts in which these knockers are mentioned, are to be referred unto the day of judgment, and not to the coming of the sinner to Christ in this life. See the texts, Matt. xxv. 11; Luke xiii. 24, 25.

These, therefore, concern thee nothing at all: thou art coming to Jesus Christ; thou art coming *now*! "Now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. vi. 2. Now God is upon the mercy-seat; now Christ Jesus sits by, continually pleading the victory of his blood for sinners; and now, even as long as this world lasts, this word of the text shall still be free, and fully fulfilled; "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Sinner, the greater sinner thou art, the greater need of mercy thou hast, and the more will Christ be glorified thereby; Come then, come and try; Come taste and see how good the Lord is to an undeserving sinner.

*Objection 6.* But (says another) I am fallen since I began to come to Christ; therefore I fear I did not come aright, and so, consequently, that Christ will not receive me.

*Answer.* Falls are dangerous; for they dishonor Christ, wound the conscience, and cause the enemies of God to speak reproachfully. But it is no good argument, I am fallen, therefore I was not coming aright to

Jesus Christ. If David, and Solomon, and Peter, had thus objected against themselves, they had added to their griefs; and yet they had at least as much cause as thou. A man whose steps are ordered by the Lord, and whose goings the Lord delights in, may yet be overtaken with a temptation that may cause him to fall. Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24. Did not Aaron fall? yea, and Moses himself? What shall we say of Hezekiah and Jehoshaphat? There are therefore falls and falls; falls pardonable, and falls unpardonable. Falls unpardonable, are falls against light, from the faith to the despising of, and trampling upon Jesus Christ and his blessed undertaking. Heb. vi. 2—5; chap. x. 23, 29. Now as for such, there remains no more sacrifice for sin; indeed they have no heart, no mind, no desire to come to Jesus Christ for life, therefore, they must perish. Nay, says the Holy Ghost, "It is impossible they should be renewed again unto repentance." Therefore, these God hath no compassion for, neither ought we; but for other falls, though they be dreadful, (and God will chastise his people for them,) they do not prove thee a graceless man, one not come to Jesus Christ for life.

It is said of the child in the gospel, that "while he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down and tore him."

Dejected sinner, it is no wonder that thou hast caught a fall in coming to Jesus Christ; is it not rather to be wondered at, that thou hast not caught before this, a thousand times, a thousand falls? considering,

1st. What fools we are by nature.

2dly. What weaknesses are in us.

3dly. What mighty powers the fallen angels, our implacable enemies are.

4thly. Considering also how often the coming man is benighted in his journey; and also what stumbling-blocks do lie in his way.

5thly. Also his familiars (that were so before) now watch for his halting, and seek by what means they may cause him to fall by the hand of their strong ones.

What then? Must we, because of these temptations, incline to fall? No. Must we not fear falls? Yes. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. x. 12. Yet let him not utterly be cast down, "The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up those that are bowed down." Make not light of falls; yet hast thou fallen? "Ye have," said Samuel, "done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve him with a perfect heart, and turn not aside; for the Lord will not forsake his people," (and he counted the coming sinner one of them,) "because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people."



"Shall come to me." Now we come to show what force there is in this promise to make them come to him. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me."

I will speak to this promise:

First, In general.

Secondly, In particular.

*In general.*—This word *shall*, is confined to these, *all*, that are given to Christ; "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Hence I conclude,

1. That coming to Jesus Christ aright, is an effect of their being, of God, given to Christ before; Mark! *they* shall come: Who? *those* that are given. *They come* then, because they were *given*: "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." Now, this is indeed a singular comfort to them that are a coming in truth to Christ, to think that the reason why they come, is, because they were given of the Father before to him. Thus, then, may the coming soul reason with himself as he comes: Am I coming indeed to Jesus Christ? This coming of mine is not to be attributed to me or my goodness, but to the grace and gift of God to Christ. God gave first my person to him, and therefore hath now given me a heart to come.

2. This word, *shall come*, maketh thy coming, not only the fruit of the gift of the Father, but also of the purpose of the Son; for these words are a divine purpose; they show us the heavenly determination of the Son. "The Father hath given them to me, and" they shall; yea, they shall "come to me." Christ is as fully in his resolution to save those given to him, as is the Father in giving of them. Christ prized the gift of his Father, he will lose nothing of it; he is resolved to save it every whit by his blood, and to raise it up again at the last day; and thus he fulfils his Father's will, and accomplisheth his own desires.

3. These words, *shall come*, make thy coming to be also the effect of an absolute promise; coming sinner, thou art concluded in a promise; thy coming is the fruit of the faithfulness of an absolute promise. It was this promise by the virtue of which thou at first receivedst strength to come; and this is the promise, by the virtue of which thou shalt be effectually brought to him. It was said to Abraham, "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son." This son was Isaac. Mark! Sarah shall *have a son*; there is the promise; and Sarah had a son; there was the fulfilling of the promise; and therefore was Isaac called the *child of the promise*.

Sarah shall *have a son*: But how if Sarah be past age? Why still the promise continues to say, Sarah shall *have a son*. But how if Sarah be barren! Why still the promise says, Sarah shall *have a son*.

But Abraham's body is now dead! Why the promise is still the same, Sarah shall *have a son*. Thus you see what virtue there is in an absolute promise; it carrieth enough in its own bowels to accomplish the thing promised, whether there be means or no in us to effect it. Wherefore this promise in the text, being an absolute promise, by virtue of it, not by virtue of ourselves, or by our own inducements, do we come to Jesus Christ; for so are the words of the text; "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

Therefore is every sincere comer to Jesus Christ called also a child of the promise. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise;" that is, we are the children that God hath promised to Jesus Christ, and given to him; yea, the children that Jesus Christ hath promised shall come to him. "All that the Father giveth me shall come."

4. This word, *shall come*, engageth Christ to communicate all manner of grace to those thus given him to make them effectually come to him. *They shall come*; that is, not if they will, but if grace, all grace, if power, wisdom, a new heart, and the Holy Spirit, and all joining together, can make them come. I say this word, *shall come*, being absolute, hath no dependence upon our own will or power, or goodness; but it engageth for us even God himself, Christ himself, the Spirit himself. When God had made the absolute promise to Abraham, That Sarah *should have a son*, Abraham did not at all look at any qualifications in himself, because the promise looked at none; but as God had by the promise absolutely promised him a son; so he considered now not his own body now dead, nor yet the barrenness of Sarah's womb. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform." He had promised, and promised absolutely, Sarah shall have a son: therefore, Abraham looks that he, to wit, God, must fulfil the condition of it. Neither is this expectation of Abraham disapproved by the Holy Ghost, but accounted good and laudable; it being that by which he gives glory to God. The Father also hath given to Christ a certain number of souls for him to save; and he himself hath said, "They shall come to him." Let the church of God then live in a joyful expectation of the utmost accomplishment of this promise; for assuredly it shall be fulfilled, and not one thousandth part of a title thereof shall fail. *They shall come to me*.

And now, before I go any farther, I will more particularly inquire into the nature of an absolute promise.

1. We call that an absolute promise that is made without any condition; or more fully thus: That is an absolute promise of God, or of Christ, which maketh over to this or that man any saving spiritual blessing, without a condition to be done on our part for the obtaining thereof. And this we have in hand is such a one. Let the best master of arts on earth show me, if he can, any condition in this text depending upon any qualification in us, which is not by the same promise concluded, shall be by the Lord Jesus effected in us.

2. An absolute promise therefore is, as we say, without if or and; that is, it requireth nothing of us, that itself may be accomplished. It saith not, they shall, if they will; but they shall: not they shall, if they use the means; but, they shall. You may say, that a will, and the use of the means, is supposed, though not expressed. But I answer, No, by no means; that is, as a condition of this promise: if they be at all included in the promise, they are included there as the fruit of the absolute promise; not as if it expected the qualification to arise from us. "Thy people shall be" willing "in the day of thy power." Ps. cx. 3. That is another absolute promise; but doth that promise suppose a willingness in us, as a condition of God's making us willing? They shall be willing, if they are willing; or, they shall be willing, if they will be willing. This is ridiculous; there is nothing of this supposed. The promise is absolute as to us; all that it engageth for its own accomplishment is, the mighty power of Christ, and his faithfulness to accomplish.

The difference therefore betwixt the absolute and conditional promise is this:

1. They differ in their terms. The absolute promises say, I will, and you shall: the other, I will if you will; or, do this, and thou shalt live. Jer. xxxi. 32, 34; Ezek. xxxiv. 24—34; Heb. viii. 7—12; Jer. iv. 1; Ezek. xviii. 30, 31, 32; Matt. xix. 21.

2. They differ in their way of communicating of good things to men: the absolute ones communicate things freely, only of grace; the other, if there be that qualification in us, that the promise calls for, not else.

3. The absolute promises therefore engage God, the other engage us; I mean God only, us only.

4. Absolute promises must be fulfilled; conditional may, or may not be fulfilled. The absolute ones must be fulfilled, because of the faithfulness of God; the other may not, because of the unfaithfulness of men.

5. The absolute promises have therefore a sufficiency in themselves to bring about their own fulfilling; the conditional have not so. The absolute promise is therefore a big-bellied promise, because it hath in itself a fulness of all desired things for us;

and will, when the time of that promise is come, yield to us mortals that which will verily save us; yea, and make us capable of answering of the demands of the promise that is conditional. Wherefore, though there be a real, yea, an eternal difference in these things (with others) betwixt the conditional and the absolute promise; yet again, in other respects, there is a blessed harmony betwixt them; as may be seen in these particulars.

1. The conditional promise calls for repentance, the absolute promise gives it. Acts v. 30, 31.

2. The conditional promise calls for faith, the absolute promise gives it. Zeph. iii. 12; Rom. xv. 12.

3. The conditional promise calleth for a new heart, the absolute promise gives it. Ezek. xxxvi.

4. The conditional promise calleth for holy obedience, the absolute promise giveth it, or causeth it. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

And as they harmoniously agree in this, so again the conditional promise biesseth the man who by the absolute promise is endued with its fruits: as for instance,

1. The absolute promise maketh men upright; and then the conditional follows, saying, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the way of the Lord." Ps. cxix. 1.

2. The absolute promise giveth to this man the fear of the Lord; and then the conditional followeth, saying, "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord." Ps. cxviii. 1.

3. The absolute promise giveth faith, and then this conditional follows, saying, "Blessed is he that believeth." Zeph. iii. 12; Luke i. 45.

4. The absolute promise brings free forgiveness of sins; and then says the conditional, "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is covered." Rom. iv. 7, 8.

5. The absolute promise says, That God's elect should hold out to the end; then the conditional follows with his blessings, "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved." 1 Pet. i. 4, 5, 7; Matt. xxiv.

Thus do the promises gloriously serve one another and us, in this their harmonious agreement.

Now the promise under consideration is an absolute promise; "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me."

This promise therefore, is, as it is said, a big-bellied promise, and hath in itself all those things to bestow upon us that the conditional calleth for at our hands. They shall come! Shall they come? Yes, they shall come! But how, if they want those things, those graces, power, and heart,



without which they cannot come? Why, "Shall come" answereth all this, and all things else that may in this matter be objected. And here I will take the liberty to amplify things.

*Objection 1.* But they are dead, dead in trespasses and sins; how shall they then come?

*Answer.* Why, "Shall come" can raise them from this death: "The hour is coming, and now is, that the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Thus, therefore, is this impediment by "Shall come" removed out of the way. They shall hear, they shall live.

*Objection 2.* But they are Satan's captives; he takes them captive at his will, and he is stronger than they: how then can they come?

*Answer.* Why, "Shall come" hath also provided a help for this. Satan hath bound that daughter of Abraham so, that she could by no means lift up herself; but yet "Shall come" set her free both in body and soul. Christ will have them turned from the power of Satan to God. But what! Must it be, if they turn themselves, or do somewhat to merit of him to turn them? No, he will do it freely, of his own good will. Alas! man, whose soul is possessed by the devil, is turned whithersoever that governor listeth, is taken captive by him, notwithstanding its natural powers, at his will; but what will he do? Will he hold him when "Shall come" puts forth itself (will he then let him) for coming to Jesus Christ? No, that cannot be! His power is but the power of a fallen angel, but "Shall come" is the word of God; therefore "Shall come" must be fulfilled; "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against him."

There were seven devils in Mary Magdalen, too many for her to get from under the power of; but when the time was come, that "Shall come" was to be fulfilled upon her, they give place, fly from her, and she comes, indeed, to Jesus Christ, according as it is written: "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me."

The man that was possessed with a legion, (Mark v.) was too much by them captivated, for him by human force to come; yea, had he had, to boot, all the men under heaven to help him, had he who said, "He shall come," withheld his mighty power: but when this promise was to be fulfilled upon him, then he comes; nor could all their power hinder his coming. It was also this ("Shall come") that preserved him from death; when by these evil spirits he was hurled hither and thither; and it was by the virtue of "Shall come" that he was at last set at liberty from them and enabled indeed to come to Christ. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

*Objection 3.* They shall, you say; but how if they will not; and if so, then what can "Shall come" do?

*Answer.* True, there are some men who say, "We are lords, we will come no more under thee." Jer. ii. 31. But as God says in another case, (if they are concerned in "Shall come" to me,) "They shall know whose words shall stand, mine or theirs." Jer. xlv. 28. Here then is the case, we must now see who will be the liar; he that saith, I will not; or he that saith, he shall come to me. You shall come, says God; I will not come, saith the sinner. Now as sure as he is concerned in this "Shall come," God will make that man eat his own words; for I will not, is the unadvised conclusion of a crazy-headed sinner; but "Shall come" was spoken by him that is of power to perform his word. "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard," said the Father: but he answered and said, I will not come. What now? will he be able to stand to his refusal? will he pursue his desperate denial? No, "he afterwards repented and went." But how came he by that repentance? Why, it was wrapped up for him in the absolute promise; and therefore notwithstanding he said, I will not, "he afterwards repented and went." By this parable, Jesus Christ sets forth the obstinacy of the sinners of the world, as touching their coming to him; they will not come, though threatened; yea, though life be offered them upon condition of coming.

But now, when "Shall come," the absolute promise of God, comes to be fulfilled upon them, then they come; because by that promise, a cure is provided against the rebellion of their will: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Thy people, what people! Why, the people that the Father hath given thee. The obstinacy and plague that is in the will of that people, shall be taken away: and they shall be made willing; "shall come" will make them willing to come to thee.

He that had seen Paul in the midst of his outrages against Christ, his gospel, and people, would hardly have thought that he would ever have been a follower of Jesus Christ, especially since he went not against his conscience in his persecuting of them. He thought verily that he ought to do what he did. But we may see what *Shall come* can do, when it comes to be fulfilled upon the soul of a rebellious sinner; he was a chosen vessel, given by the Father to the Son; and now the time being come that *Shall come* was to take him in hand, behold he is overmastered, astonished, and with trembling and reverence, in a moment becomes willing to be obedient to the heavenly call. Acts ix.

And were not they far gone (that you

read of, Acts ii.) who had their hands and hearts in the murder of the Son of God: and to show their resolutely never to repent of that horrid fact, said, "His blood be on us and our children." But must their obstinacy rule? Must they be bound to their own ruin, by the rebellion of their stubborn wills? No, not *those of these* the Father gave to Christ; wherefore, at the times appointed, *Shall come* breaks in among them: the absolute promise takes them in hand; and then they come indeed, crying out to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" No stubbornness of men's will can stand, when God hath absolutely said the contrary; *Shall come* can make them come as doves to their windows, that had afore resolved never to come to him.

The Lord spake unto Manasseh, and to his people, by the prophets; but would he hear? No, he would not. But shall Manasseh come off thus? No, he *shall not*. Therefore he being also one of those whom the Father hath given to the Son, and so falling within the bounds and reach of *Shall come*; at last *Shall come* takes him in hand, and then he comes indeed. He comes bowing and bending; he humbles himself greatly, and made supplication to the Lord, and prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and had mercy upon him. 2 Chron. iii. 33.

The thief upon the cross, at first, did rail with his fellow upon Jesus Christ; but he was one that the Father had given to him, and therefore *Shall come* must handle him and his rebellious will. And behold, so soon as he is dealt withal, by virtue of that absolute promise, how soon he buckleth, leaves his railing, and falls to supplicating of the Son of God for mercy; "Lord," saith he, "remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Matt. xxvii. 44. Luke xxiii. 40.

**Objection 4.** They come, say you; but how if they be blind and see not the way? For some are kept off from Christ, not only by the obstinacy of their will, but by the blindness of their mind: Now, if they be blind, how shall they come?

**Answer.** The question is not, Are they blind? But are they within the reach and power of *Shall come*? if so, that Christ that said, *they shall come*, will find them eyes, or a guide, or both, to bring them to himself. *Must, is for the King.* If they shall come, they shall come: no impediment shall hinder.

The Thessalonians' darkness did not hinder them from being the children of light; "I am come," saith Christ, "that they see not might see." And if he saith, "See ye blind that have no eyes;" Who shall hinder it?

This promise therefore is, as I said, a

big-bellied promise, having in the bowels of it, all things that shall occur to the complete fulfilling of itself. *They shall come.* But it is objected, that they are blind: Well, *Shall come* is still the same, and continueth to say, *They shall come to me.* Therefore he saith again, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not. I will lead them in paths that they know not. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight; these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

Mark! I will bring them, though they be blind; I will bring them by a way they know not, I will, I will: and therefore *they shall come to me.*

**Objection 5.** But how, if they have exceeded many in sin, and so made themselves far more abominable? They are the ring-leading sinners in the country, the town, or family.

**Answer.** What then? Shall that hinder the execution of *Shall come*? It is not transgressions, nor sins, nor all their transgression in all their sins, if they by the Father are given to Christ to save them, that shall hinder this promise, that it should not be fulfilled upon them. "In those days, and at that time," saith the Lord, "the iniquities of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." Not that they had none, for they abounded in transgression; but God would pardon, cover, hide, and put them away, by virtue of his absolute promise, by which they are given to Christ to save them. "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me for a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear of all the good I do unto them; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I procure in it."

**Objection 6.** But how if they have not faith and repentance? How shall they come then?

**Answer.** Why, he that saith, *They shall come*, shall he not make it good? If they shall come, they shall come; and he that hath said they shall come, if faith and repentance be the way to come, as indeed they are, then faith and repentance shall be given to them; for *shall come* must be fulfilled on them.

1. Faith shall be given them: "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. There shall be a root of Jesse, and he shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; and in him shall the Gentiles trust."

2. They shall have repentance: He is exalted to give repentance: "They shall



come weeping, and seeking the Lord their God." And again, "with weeping and supplication will I lead them."

I told you before that an absolute promise hath all conditional ones in the belly of it, and also provision to answer all those qualifications, that they propound to him that seeketh for their benefit: And it must be so: for if *Shall come* be an absolute promise, as indeed it is, then it must be fulfilled, upon every one of those concerned therein. I say, it must be fulfilled, if God can by grace, and his absolute will, fulfil it. Besides, since coming and believing is all one, "He that cometh to me *shall* never hunger, and he that believeth in me *shall* never thirst."

Then when he saith, they *Shall come*, it is as much as to say, they *shall believe*, and consequently repent to the saving of the soul. So then the present want of faith and repentance cannot make the promise of God of none effect; because that this promise hath in it to give, what others call for and expect. I will give them an heart, I will give them repentance, I will give them faith.

Mark these words; "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." But how came he to be a *new creature*, since none can create but God? Why, God indeed doth make *new creatures*. "Behold," saith he, "I make all things new." And hence it follows even after he had said, they are *new creatures*; and all things are of God; that is all these new creatures stand in the several operations, and special workings of the Spirit of grace, who is God.

*Objection 7.* But how shall they escape all those dangerous and damnable opinions, that like rocks and quicksands are in the way in which they are going.

*Answer.* Indeed this age is an age of errors, if ever there was an age of errors in the world; but yet the gift of the Father, laid claim to by the Son in the text, must needs escape them, and in conclusion come to him. There are a company of *shall comes* in the Bible, that doth secure them; not but that they may be assaulted by them; yea, and also for the time entangled and detained by them from the bishop of their souls; but these *shall comes* will break those chains and fetters, that those given to Christ are entangled in, and they shall come, because he hath said they shall come to him.

Indeed, errors are like that whore of whom you read in the Proverbs, that sitteth in her seat in the high places of the city, "to call passengers who go on their right way." But the persons, as I said, that by the Father are given to the Son to save them, are fit one time or other, secured by *shall come to me*.

And therefore, of such it is said, God will guide them with his eye, with his counsel, by his Spirit, and that in the way of peace, by the springs of water, and into all truth. So then he that hath such a guide, (and all that the Father give to Christ shall have it) he shall escape those dangers; he shall not err in the way; yea, though he be a fool he shall not err therein; for of every such an one it is said, "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."

There were thieves and robbers before Christ's coming, as there are also now; but saith he, "The sheep did not hear them."

And why did they not hear them, but because they were under the *power of shall come*, that absolute promise, that had that grace in itself to bestow upon them, as could make them able rightly to distinguish of voices; "My sheep hear my voice." But how came they to hear it? Why, to them it is given to know and to hear, and that distinguishingly. John x. 8, 16; chap. v. 25; Eph. v. 14.

Further, The very plain sentence of the text makes provision against all these things; for, saith it, "All that the Father giveth me, *shall* come to me;" that is, shall not be stopped, or be allured to take up any where short of me, nor shall they turn aside, to abide with any besides me.

*Shall come to me—To me.* By these words there is further insinuated, though not expressed, a double cause for their coming to him.

1. There is in Christ a fulness of all-sufficiency of that, even of all that which is needful to make us happy.

2. Those that indeed come to him, do therefore come to him that they may receive it at his hand.

For the first of these, there is in Christ a fulness of all-sufficiency of all that, even of all that which is needful to make us happy. Hence it is said, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." And again, "Of his fulness, all we have received, and grace for grace." Col. i. 19; John i. 16. It is also said of him, that his riches are unsearchable, "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Eph. iii. 8. Hear what he saith of himself, "Riches and honor are with me, even durable riches and righteousness; My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver: I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment, that I may cause them that love me to inherit substance. And I will fill their treasures. Prov. xviii. 19—21.

This in general: But, more particularly,

1. There is that light in Christ that is sufficient to lead them out of, and from all

that darkness, in the midst of which all others, but them that come to him, stumble, and fall, and perish; "I am the light of the world," saith he; "he that followeth me, shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Man by nature is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, for darkness hath blinded his eyes; neither can any thing but Jesus Christ lead men out of this darkness. Natural conscience cannot do it: This prerogative belongs only to Jesus Christ.

2. There is life in Christ, that is to be found no where else: life, as a principle in the soul, by which it shall be acted and enabled to do that which, through him, is pleasing to God. "He that believeth in (or cometh to) me," saith he, as the scriptures have said, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Without this life a man is dead, whether he be bad, or whether he be good; that is, good in his own and other men's esteem. There is no true and eternal life, but what is in the Me that speaketh in the text.

There is also life for those that come to him, to be had by faith in his flesh and blood. "He that eateth me, shall live by me."

And this is a life against that death that comes by the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law, under which all men are, and for ever must be, unless they eat Me, that speaks in the text. "Whoso findeth me," saith he, "findeth life;" deliverance from the everlasting death and destruction, that, without me, he shall be devoured by.

Nothing is more desirable than life, to him that hath in himself the sentence of condemnation; and here only is life to be found. This life, to wit, eternal life, this life is in his Son; that is, in him that saith in the text, "All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me."

3. The person speaking in the text, is he alone by whom poor sinners have admittance to, and acceptance with the Father, because of the glory of his righteousness, by and in which he presenteth them, amiable and spotless in his sight; neither is there any way besides him, so to come to the Father. "I am the way," saith he, "the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me." All other ways to God are dead and damnable; the destroying cherubims stand with flaming swords, turning every way to keep all others from his presence. I say, all others but them that come by him.

"I am the door; by me," saith he, "if any man shall enter in, he shall be saved."

The person speaking in the text, is he, and only he, that can give stable and everlasting peace; therefore, saith he, "My

peace I give unto you." My peace, which is a peace with God, peace of conscience, and that of an everlasting duration. My peace, peace that cannot be matched, "not as the world giveth, give I unto you;" for the world's peace is but carnal and transitory, but mine is divine and eternal. Hence it is called the peace of God, that passeth all understanding.

4. The person speaking in the text, hath enough of all things truly spiritually good, to satisfy the desire of every longing soul. "And Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. And to him that is athirst, I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely."

5. With the person speaking in the text is power to perfect, and defend, and deliver those that come to him for safe-guard. "All power," saith he, "in heaven and earth are given unto me."

Thus might I multiply instances in this nature in abundance. But,

Secondly, They that in truth do come to him, do therefore come to him that they may receive it at his hand. They come for light, they come for life, they come for reconciliation with God; they also come for peace, they come that their souls may be satisfied with spiritual good, and that they may be protected by him against all spiritual and eternal damnation; and he alone is able to give them all this, to the fulfilling of their joy to the full, as they also find when they come to him.

This is evident,

1. From the plain declaration of those that already are come to him. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access with boldness into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

2. It is evident also, in that while they keep their eyes upon him, they never desire to change him for another, or to add to themselves some other thing, together with him, to make up their spiritual joy. "God forbid," said Paul, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yea, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him: not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

3. It is evident also by their earnest desires that others might be made partakers of their blessedness. "Brethren," said Paul, "my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel, is, that they might be saved;" that is, that way that he expected to be saved



himself; as he saith also to the Galatians, "Brethren," saith he, "I beseech you, be as I am, for I am as ye are;" that is, I am a sinner as ye are. Now, I beseech you, seek for life, as I am seeking for it; as who should say, For there is a sufficiency in the Lord Jesus both for me and you.

4. It is evident also, by the triumph that such men make over all their enemies, both bodily and ghostly: "Now thanks be to God," said Paul, "who causeth us always to triumph in Jesus Christ." And who shall separate us from the love of Christ our Lord; and again, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. It is evident also, for that they are made by the glory of that which they have found in him, to suffer and endure what the devil and hell itself hath or could invent, as a means to separate them from him. Again, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (as is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us: For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus."

"Shall come to me." O the heart-attracting glory that is in Jesus Christ, (when he is discovered,) to draw those to him that are given to him of the Father: Therefore, those that came of old, rendered this as the cause of their coming to him. "And we beheld the glory, as of the only begotten of the Father." And the reason why others come not, but perish in their sins, is for want of a sight of his glory. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

There is, therefore, heart-pulsing glory in Jesus Christ, which, discovered, draws the men to him; wherefore, by "shall come to me," Christ may mean, when his glory is discovered, then they must come, then they shall come to me. Therefore, as the true comers come with weeping and relenting, as being sensible of their own vileness; so again it is said, "That the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion, with singing, and everlasting joy upon their

heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away; "that is, at the sight of the glory of that grace, that shows itself to them now, in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the hopes that they now have, of being with him in the heavenly tabernacles. Therefore, it saith again, "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace."

There is, therefore, heart-attracting glory in the Lord Jesus Christ, which, when discovered, subjects the heart to the word, and makes us come to him.

It is said of Abraham, That when he dwelt in Mesopotamia, the God of glory appeared unto him, saying, "Get thee out of thy country." And what then? Why, away he went from his house and friends, and all the world could not stay him. Now, as the Psalmist says, "Who is the king of glory?" he answers, "The Lord, mighty in battle." And who was that but he that spoiled principalities and powers, when he did hang upon the tree, triumphing over them thereon? And who was that but Jesus Christ, even the person speaking in the text? Therefore, he saith of Abraham, "He saw his day." Yea, saith he to the Jews, "your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad."

Indeed the carnal man says, at last, in his heart, "There is no form or comeliness in Christ;" and when we shall see him, "There is no beauty that we should desire him;" but he lies: this he speaks as having never seen him. But they that stand in his house, and look upon him through the glass of his word, by the help of his Holy Spirit, they will tell you other things. But we, say they, "all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and changed into the same image, from glory to glory." They see glory in his person, glory in his understanding, glory in the merit of his blood, and glory in the perfection of his righteousness; yea, heart-affecting, heart-sweetening, and heart-changing glory!

Indeed his glory is veiled, and cannot be seen, but as discovered by the Father. It is veiled with flesh, with meanness of descent from the flesh, and with that ignominy and shame that attended him in the flesh; but they that can, in God's light, see through these things, they shall see glory in him; yea, such glory as will draw and pull their hearts unto him.

Moses was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter; and for aught I know, had been king at last, had he conformed to the present vanities that were there at court; but he could not, he would not do it: why? what was the matter? Why! he saw more in the worst of Christ, (bear with the

expression,) than he saw in the best of all the treasures of the land of Egypt. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect to the recompense of reward. He forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king. But what emboldened him to do this? Why, he endured; for he had a sight of the person speaking in the text: "He endured, as seeing him who is invisible." But I say, would a sight of Jesus have thus taken away Moses's heart from a crown, and a kingdom, &c. had he not by that sight seen more in him than was to be seen in them?

Therefore, when he saith, "Shall come to me," he means they shall have a discovery of the glory of the grace that is in him; and the beauty and glory of that is of such virtue, that it constraineth and forceth, with a blessed violence, the hearts of those that are given to him.

Moses of whom we spake before, was *no child* when he was thus taken with the beauteous glory of this Lord: he was forty years old, and so, consequently, was able, being a man of that wisdom and opportunity as he was, to make the best judgment of the things, and of the goodness of them that were before him in the land of Egypt. But he, even he it was, that set that low esteem upon the glory of Egypt, to count it not worth the meddling with, when he had a sight of this Lord Jesus Christ. This wicked world thinks, that the fancies of a heaven, and happiness hereafter, may serve well enough to take the heart of such as either have not the world's good things to delight in, or that are fools, and know not how to delight themselves therein. But let them know again, that we have had men of all ranks and qualities, that have been taken with the glory of our Lord Jesus, and have left all to follow him: as Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, and who not? that had either wit or grace, to savor heavenly things? Indeed, none can stand off from him, nor any longer hold out against him, to whom he reveals the glory of his grace.

"And him that cometh to me" I will in no wise cast out. By those words our Lord Jesus doth set forth, yet more amply, the great goodness of his nature towards the coming sinner. Before, he said, they *shall come*; and he declareth, "that with heart and affections he will receive them." But, by the way, let me speak one word or two to the seeming conditionality of this promise with which now I have to do.

"And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Where it is evident (may some say) that Christ's receiving us to mercy, depends upon our coming, and so our salvation by Christ is conditional: If we come, we shall be received; if not, we shall not: for that is fully intimated by the words. The promise of reception is only to him that cometh: "And him that cometh." I answer, that the coming in these words mentioned, as a condition, of being received to life, is that which is promised, yea, concluded to be effected in us by the promise going before. In those latter words, coming to Christ, is implicitly required of us; and in the words before, that grace that can make us come is positively promised to us. "All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out thence." We come to Christ, because it is said, "We shall come;" because it is given to us to *come*; so that the condition which is expressed by Christ in these latter words, is absolutely promised in the words before.

And indeed, the coming here intended, is nothing else but the effect of "shall come to me. They shall come, and I will not cast them out."

"And him that cometh."—He saith not, and him that *is come* but him *that cometh*.

To speak to these words,—

1. In general.

2. More particularly.

*In general.*—They suggest unto us these four things:

1. That Jesus Christ doth build upon it, that since the Father gave his people to him, they shall be enabled to come unto him. "And him that cometh," as who should say, I know that since they are given to me, they shall be enabled to *come unto me*. He saith not, *If they come*, or I suppose they will *come*—but, *and him that cometh*. By these words, therefore he shows, that he addresseth himself to the receiving of them whom the Father gave him to save them: I say, he addresseth himself or prepareth himself to receive them; by which, as I said, he concludeth or buildeth upon it, that they shall indeed *come* to him. He looketh that the Father should bring them into his bosom, and so stands ready to embrace them.

2. Christ also suggesteth by these words, that he very well knoweth who are given to him; not by their coming to him, but by their being given to him. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh, &c." this *him* he knoweth to be one of them that the Father hath given him; and therefore he receiveth him, even because the Father hath given *him* to him. "I know my sheep," saith he; not only those that already have knowledge of



him, but those too that yet are ignorant of him. "Other sheep have I," said he, "which are not of this fold;" not of the Jewish church, but those that lie in their sins, even the rude and barbarous Gentiles. Therefore, when Paul was afraid to stay at Corinth, from a supposition that some mischief might befall him there; "be not afraid," said the Lord Jesus to him, "but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I have much people in this city." The people that the Lord here speaks of, were not at this time accounted his, by reason of a work of conversion that already had passed upon them, but by virtue of the gift of the Father; for he had given them unto him. Therefore was Paul to stay here, to speak the word of the Lord to them, that by his speaking, the Holy Ghost might effectually work over their souls, to the causing them to come to him, who was also ready with heart and soul to receive them.

3. Christ, by these words, also suggested, that no more *come* unto him than indeed are given him of the Father; for the *him* in this place, is one of the *all*, that by Christ was mentioned before: "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me," and every *him* of that *all*, "I will in no wise cast out." This the apostle insinuateth, where he saith, "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Mark, as in the text, so here he speaketh of *all*; "Until we all come." We all! All who? Doubtless, "All that the Father giveth to Christ." This is farther insinuated because he calleth this *all* the body of Christ; the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; by which he means the universal number given, to wit, the true elect church, which is said to be his body and fulness.

4. Christ Jesus by these words, farther suggesteth that he is well content with this gift of the Father to him. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." I will heartily, willingly, and with great content of mind, receive him.

They show us also, that Christ's love in receiving, as large as his Father's love in giving, and no larger. Hence, he thanks him for his gift; and also thanks him for hiding of him and his things from the rest of the wicked.

But, secondly, and more particularly, "And *him* that cometh." And *him*. This word *him*; by it Christ looketh back to the

gift of the Father; not only to the lump and whole of the gift, but to the every *him* of that lump. As who should say, I do not only accept of the gift of my Father in the general, but have a special regard to every of them in particular; and will secure not only some, or the greatest part, but every *him*, every dust; not an hoof of all shall be lost, or left behind. And indeed, in this he consenteth to his Father's will, which is, that of all that he hath given him, he should lose nothing.

And *him*. Christ Jesus also, by his thus dividing the gift of his Father into *hims*, and by his speaking of them in the singular number, shows what a particular work shall be wrought in each one, at the time appointed of the Father. "And it shall come to pass in that day," saith the prophet, "that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river, to the stream of Egypt; and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel." Here are the *hims* one by one, to be gathered to him by the Father.

He shows also hereby, that no lineage, kindred, or relation, can at all be profited by any outward or carnal union with the person that the Father hath given to Christ. It is only *him*, the given *him*, the coming *him*, that he intends absolutely to secure. Men make great ado with the children of believers; and oh, the children of believers! But if the child of the believer is not the *him* concerned in this absolute promise, it is not these men's great cry, nor yet what the parent or child can do, that can interest him in this promise of the Lord Christ, this absolute promise.

And *him*. There are divers sorts of persons that the Father hath given to Jesus Christ; they are not all of one rank, of one quality; some are high, some are low; some are wise, some fools; some are more civil, and complying with the law; some more profane, and averse to him and his gospel. Now, since those that are given to him are in some sense so diverse; and again, since he yet saith, "And him that cometh, &c," he by that, doth give us to understand, that he is not, as men, for picking and choosing, to take a best, and leave a worst, but he is for *him* that the Father hath given him, and that cometh to him. "He will not alter nor change it; a good for a bad, or a bad for a good;" but will take him as he is, and will save his soul.

There is many a sad wretch given by the Father to Jesus Christ; but not one of them all is despised or slighted by him.

It is said of those that the Father hath given to Christ, that they have done worse than the heathen; that they were murderers, thieves, drunkards, unclean persons, and what not; but he has received them,

washed them, and saved them. A fit emblem of this sort is that wretched instance mentioned in the 16th of Ezekiel, that was cast out in a stinking condition, to the loathing of its person in the day that it was born; a creature in such a wretched condition, that no eye pitied, to do any of the things there mentioned unto it, or to have compassion upon it; no eye but his that speaketh in the text.

*And him.* Let him be as red as blood, let him be as red as crimson: crimson sinners, of a double die; dipped and dipped again, before they come to Jesus Christ. Art thou that readest these lines such a one? speak out man. Art thou such a one? and art thou now coming to Jesus Christ for the mercy of justification, that thou mightest be made white in his blood, and be covered with his righteousness? Fear not; for as much as this thy coming betokeneth that thou art of the number of them that the Father hath given to Christ; for he will in no wise cast thee out. "Come now," saith Christ, "and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

*And him.* There was many a strange *him* came to Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh; but he received them all, without turning any away. "Speaking unto them of the kingdom of God, and healing such as had need of healing." These words, *and him*, are, therefore, words to be wondered at: that not one of them, who, by virtue of the Father's gift, and drawing, are coming to Jesus Christ, I say, that not one of them, whatever they have been, whatever they have done, should be rejected, or set by, but admitted to a share in his saving grace. It is said in Luke, that the people "wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." Now this is one of his gracious words; these words are like drops of honey, as it is said, "Pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." These are gracious words indeed, even as full as a faithful and merciful high-priest could speak them. Luther saith, "When Christ speaketh, he hath a mouth as wide as heaven and earth;" that is, to speak fully to the encouragement of every sinful *him* that is coming to Jesus Christ. And that this word is certain, hear how he himself confirms it: "Heaven and earth," saith he, "shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

It is also confirmed by the testimony of the four evangelists, who gave faithful relation of his loving reception of all sorts of coming sinners, whether they were publicans, harlots, thieves, possessed of devils, bedlams, and what not?

This then shows us, 1. "The greatness of the merits of Christ.

2. The willingness of his heart to impute them for life to the great, if coming, sinners.

1. This shows us the greatness of the merits of Christ: for it must not be supposed, that his words are bigger than his worthiness. He is strong to execute his word: he can do, as well as speak. "He can do exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think," even to the uttermost, and outside of his word.

Now then, since he includeth any coming *him*; it must be concluded, that he can save to the uttermost sin, any coming *him*.

Do you think, I say, that the Lord Jesus did not think before he spake? he speaks all in righteousness, and therefore, by his word, we are to judge how mighty he is to save.

He spake in righteousness, in very faithfulness, when he began to build this blessed gospel-fabric; he first sat down, and counted the cost: and knew he was able to finish it! What, Lord! *any him? any him* that cometh to thee! This is a Christ *worth* looking after; this is a Christ worth coming to.

This, then, should learn us diligently to consider the natural force of every word of God; and to judge of Christ's ability to save, not by our sins, or by our shallow apprehensions of his grace; but by his word, which is the true measure of grace.

And if we do not judge thus, we shall dishonor his grace, lose the benefit of his word, and needlessly fright ourselves into many discouragements, through coming to Jesus Christ. *Him, any him* that cometh, hath sufficient from this word of Christ to feed himself with hopes of salvation. As thou art, therefore, coming, O thou coming sinner, judge not whether Christ can save thee, by the true sense of his words: judge, coming sinner, of the efficacy of his blood, of the perfection of his righteousness, and of the prevalency of his intercession by his word. "And him," saith he, "that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." *In no wise*, that is, for no sin: judge, therefore, by his word, how able he is to save thee: It is said of God's sayings to the children of Israel, "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord hath spoken to the house of Israel; all came to pass." And again, "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you, all are come to pass unto you; and not one thing hath failed thereof."

Coming sinner, what promise thou findest in the word of Christ, strain it whether thou canst, so thou dost not corrupt it, and his blood and merits will answer all; what



the word saith, or any true consequence that is drawn therefrom, that we may boldly venture upon: as here in the text he saith, "And him that cometh," indefinitely, without the least intimation of the rejection of any, though never so great, if he be a coming sinner. Take it then for granted, that thou, whoever thou art, if coming, art intended in these words; neither shall it injure Christ at all, if, as Benhadad's servants served Ahab, thou shalt catch him at his word. "Now," saith the text, "the man did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him," to wit, any word of grace; "and did hastily catch it." And it happened that Ahab had called Benhadad his brother. The man replied, therefore, "Thy brother Benhadad!" catching him at his word. Sinner, coming sinner, serve Jesus Christ thus, and he will take it kindly at thy hands. When he, in his argument, called the Canaanitish woman dog, she caught him at it, and said, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." I say, she caught him thus in his words, and he took it kindly, saying, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Catch him, coming sinner, catch him in his words; surely he will take it kindly, and will not be offended at thee.

2. The other thing that I told you is showed from these words, is this: the willingness of Christ's heart, to impute his mercies for life, to the great, if coming sinner. "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

The awakened, coming sinner, doth not so easily question the power of Christ, as his willingness to save him: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst," said one. He did not put the *if* upon his power, but upon his will: he concluded he could, but he was not as fully of persuasion that he would; but we have the same ground to believe that he will, as we have to believe he can; and indeed, ground for both is the word of God. If he was not willing, why did he promise? Why did he say, he would receive the coming sinner? Coming sinner, take notice of this; we use to plead practises with men, and why not with God likewise? I am sure we have no more ground for one than the other; for we have to plead the promise of a faithful God. Jacob took him there: "Thou saidst," said he, "I will surely do thee good." For, from this promise, he concluded, that it followed in reason, He must be willing.

The text also gives some ground for us to draw the same conclusion. "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Here is his willingness asserted, as well as his power suggested. It is worth

your observation, that Abraham's faith considered rather God's power than his willingness; that is, he drew his conclusion, *I shall have a child*, from the power that was in God to fulfil the promise to him: for he concluded he was willing to give him one, else he would not have promised one. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform." But was not his faith exercised, or tried, about his willingness too? No, there was no show of reason for that, because he had promised it: indeed, had he not promised it, he might lawfully have doubted it: but since he had promised it, there was left no ground at all for doubting, because his willingness to give a son was demonstrated in his promising him a son. These words, therefore, are sufficient ground to encourage any coming sinner, that Christ is willing to his power to receive him; and since he hath power also to do what he will, there is no ground at all left to the coming sinner, any more to doubt; but to come in full hope of acceptance, and of being received unto grace and mercy. "And him that cometh." He saith not, and him that is to come; but, "and him that cometh;" that is, and him whose heart begins to move after me, who is leaving all for my sake; *him* who is looking out, who is on his journey to me. We must, therefore, distinguish betwixt coming and being come to Jesus Christ. He that is come to him, has attained of him more sensibly what he felt before he wanted, than he has that but yet is coming to him.

A man that is come to Christ, has the advantage of him that is but coming to him: and that in seven things.

1. He that is come to Christ, is nearer to him than he that is but coming to him; for he that is but coming to him, is yet, in some sense, at a distance from him; as it is said of the coming prodigal, "And while he was yet a great way off." Now, he that is nearer to him, hath the best sight of him; and so is able to make the best judgment of his wonderful grace and beauty, as God saith, "Let them come near, and let them speak." And as the apostle John saith, "And we have seen, and do testify, that God sent his Son to be Saviour of the world." He that is not yet come, though he is coming, is not fit, not being indeed capable to make that judgment of the worth and glory of the grace of Christ, as he is that is come to him, and hath seen and beheld it. Therefore, sinner, suspend thy judgment till thou art come nearer.

2. He that is come to Christ has the advantage of him that is but coming, in that he is eased of his burden; for he that is

but coming, is not eased of his burden. He that is come, has cast his burden upon the Lord. By faith he hath seen himself released thereof; but he that is but coming, hath it yet, as to sense and feeling, upon his own shoulders. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden," implies, that their burden, though they are coming, is yet upon them, and so will be till indeed they are come to him.

3. He that is come to Christ, hath the advantage of him that is but coming, in this also, namely, he hath drunk of the sweet and soul-refreshing water of life; but he that is but coming, hath not: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Mark! he must come to him before he drinks; according to that of the prophet, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." He drinketh not as he cometh, but when he is come to the water.

4. He that is come to Christ, has the advantage of him that as yet is but coming, in this also, to wit, he is not terrified with the noise, and as I may call it, hue and cry, which the avenger of blood makes at the heels of him, that yet is but coming to him. When the slayer was on his flight to the city of his refuge, he had the noise or fear of the avenger of blood at his heels; but when he was come to the city, and was entered thereinto, the noise ceased: even so it is with him that is coming to Jesus Christ: he heareth many a dreadful sound in his ear: sounds of death and damnation, which he that is come, is at present freed from. Therefore, he saith, "Come, and I will give you rest;" and so he saith again, "We that have believed do enter into rest," as he said, &c.

5. He, therefore, that is come to Christ, is not so subject to those dejections, and castings down, by reason of the rage and assaults of the evil one, as is the man that is but coming to Jesus Christ, though he has temptations too. "And whilst he was yet coming, the devil threw him down and tore him." For he has, though Satan still roareth upon him, those experimental comforts and refreshments, to wit, in his treasury, to present himself with, in times of temptation and conflict; which he that is but coming has not.

6. He that is come to Christ, has the advantage of him that is but coming to him, in this also, to wit, he hath upon him the wedding-garment, &c.: but he that is coming has not. The prodigal, when coming home to his father, was clothed with nothing but rags, and was tormented with an empty belly; but when he was come, the best robe is brought out, also the gold ring, and the shoes, yea, they are put upon him, to his great rejoicing. The fattened calf was

killed for him; the music was struck up to make him merry; and thus also the Father himself sang of him, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost and is found."

7. In a word, he that is come to Christ, his groans and tears, his doubts and fears, are turned into songs and praises, for that he hath now received the atonement, and the earnest of his inheritance; but he that is but yet a coming, hath not those praises nor songs of deliverance with him; nor has he as yet received the atonement and earnest of his inheritance, which is the sealing testimony of the Holy Ghost, through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon his conscience; for he is not come.

"And him that cometh."—There is further to be gathered from this word *cometh* these following particulars:

1. That Jesus Christ hath his eye upon and takes notice of the first moving of the heart of a sinner after him. Coming sinner, thou canst not move with desires after Christ, but he sees the working of those desires in thy heart: "All my desires," said David, "are before thee, and my groanings are not hid from thee." This he spake, as he was coming (after he had back-slidden) to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is said of the prodigal, "that while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him," had his eye upon him, and upon the going out of his heart after him."

When Nathaniel was come to Jesus Christ, the Lord said to them that stood before him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." But Nathaniel answered him, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." There I suppose, Nathaniel was pouring out of his soul to God for mercy, or that he would give him good understanding about the Messiah to come: and Jesus saw all the workings of his honest heart at that time.

Zaccheus also had some secret movings of heart, such as they were, towards Jesus Christ, when he ran before, and climbed up the tree to see him; and the Lord Jesus Christ had his eye upon him; therefore, when he was come to the place, he looked up to him, bids him come down: "for to-day," said he, "I must abide at thy house," to wit, in order to the further completing the work of grace in his soul. Remember this, coming sinner.

2. As Jesus hath his eye upon, so he hath his heart open to receive the coming sinner. This is verified by the text: "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." This is also discovered by his preparing of the way, in his making of it easy (as it may be) to the coming sinner;



which preparation is manifest by these blessed words, "I will in no wise cast out," of which more when we come to the place. "And while he was yet a great way off, his Father saw him, and had compassion on him; and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." All these expressions do strongly prove, that the heart of Christ is open to receive the coming sinner.

3. As Jesus Christ hath his eye upon, and his heart open to receive; so he hath resolved already that nothing shall alienate his heart from receiving the coming sinner. No sins of the coming sinner, nor the length of the time that he hath abode in them, shall, by any means, prevail with Jesus Christ to reject him. Coming sinner, thou art coming to a loving Lord Jesus.

4. These words, therefore, dropped from his blessed mouth, on purpose that the coming sinner might take encouragement to continue on his journey, until he be come indeed to Jesus Christ. It was, doubtless, a great encouragement to blind Bartimeus, that Jesus Christ stood still and called him, when he was crying, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me:" therefore, it is said, "he cast away his garment, rose up and came to Jesus." Now, if a call to come hath such encouragement in it, what is a promise of receiving such, but an encouragement much more? And observe it, though he had a call to come, yet not having a promise, his faith was forced to work upon a mere consequence, saying, he calls me; and surely, since he calls me, he will grant me my desire. Ah! but coming sinner, thou hast no need to go so far about, as to draw, in this matter, consequences, because thou hast plain promises: "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Here is full, plain, yea, what encouragement one can desire; for suppose thou wert admitted to make a promise thyself, and Christ should attest that he would fulfil it upon the sinner that cometh to him, couldst thou make a better promise? couldst thou invent a more full, free, or larger promise? a promise that looks at the first moving of the heart after Jesus Christ? a promise that declares, yea, that engageth Christ Jesus to open his heart to receive the coming sinner! yea, farther, a promise that demonstrateth that the Lord Jesus is resolved freely to receive, and will in no wise cast out, nor means to reject the soul of the coming sinner! For all this lieth fully in this promise, and doth naturally flow therefrom. Here thou needest not make use of far-fetched consequences, nor strain thy wits, to force encouraging arguments from the text. Coming sinners, the words are plain.

"And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

"And him that *cometh*." There are two sorts of sinners that are coming to Jesus Christ.

1. Him that hath never, until of late, at all begun to come.

2. Him that came formerly, and after that went back, but has since bethought himself; and is now coming again.

Both these sorts of sinners are intended by the *him* in the text, as is evident; because both are now the coming sinners.

For the first of these; the sinner that hath never, until of late, begun to come, his way is more easy: I do not say, more plain and open, to come to Christ than is the other, (those lost having the clod of a guilty conscience of the sin of backsliding, hanging at their heels.) But all the encouragement of the gospel, with what invitations are herein contained to coming sinners, are as free and as open to the one as the other; so that they may with the same freedom and liberty, as from the word, both alike claim interest in the promise. "All things are ready," all things for the coming backslider, as well as for the others: "Come to the wedding; and let him that is athirst come."

But having spoke of the first of these already, I shall here pass it by; and shall speak a word or two to him that is coming, after backsliding, to Jesus Christ for life.

Thy way, O thou sinner of a double dye, thy way is open to come to Jesus Christ; I mean thee, whose heart, after long backsliding, doth think of turning to him again. Thy way, I say, is open to him, as is the way of the other sorts of comers; as appears by what follows:

1. Because the text makes no exception against thee: it doth not say, and any *him*, but a backslider; any *him*, but him. The text doth not thus object, but indefinitely openeth wide its golden arms to every coming soul, without the least exception; therefore thou mayest come. And take heed that thou shut not that door against thy soul by unbelief, which God has opened by his grace.

2. Nay, the text is so far from excepting against thy coming, that it strongly suggesteth, that thou art one of the souls intended, O thou coming backslider; else what need that clause have been so inserted, "I will in no wise cast out!" As who should say, though those that now come, are such as have formerly backslidden; I will in *no wise* cast away the fornicator, the covetous, the railer, the drunkard, or other common sinners, nor yet the backslider neither.

3. That the backslider is intended, is evident.

1st. For that he is sent to by name, "Go tell his disciples, and Peter." But Peter

was a godly man. True, but he was also a backslider, yea, a desperate backslider: he had denied his master once, twice, thrice, cursing and swearing that he knew him not. If this was not backsliding, if this was not a high and eminent backsliding, yea, a higher backsliding than thou art capable of, I have thought amiss.

Again, when David had backslidden, and had committed adultery and murder in his backsliding, he must be sent to by name. "And," saith the text, "The Lord sent Nathan to David." And he sent him to tell him, after he had brought him to unfeigned acknowledgment, "The Lord hath also put away, or forgiven thy sins."

This man was also far gone: he took a man's wife and killed her husband, and endeavored to cover all with wicked dissimulation. He did this I say, after God exalted him and showed him great favor; wherefore, his transgression was greatened also by the prophet with mighty aggravations: yet he was accepted, and that with gladness, at the first step he took in his returning to Christ; for the first step of the backslider's return is to say, sensibly and unfeignedly, "I have sinned:" but he had no sooner said thus, but a pardon was pronounced, yea, thrust into his bosom. "And Nathan said unto David, the Lord hath also put away thy sin."

2dly. As the person of the backslider is mentioned by name, so also is his sin, that, if possible, thy objections against thy returning to Christ, may be taken out of the way; I say, thy sin also is mentioned by name, and mixed, as mentioned, with words of grace and favor. "I will heal their backsliding, and love them freely." What sayest thou now backslider?

3dly. Nay, farther, thou art not only mentioned by name, and thy sin by the nature of it; but thou thyself, who art a returning backslider, put,

1. Amongst God's Israel, "Return, O backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and will not keep anger for ever."

2. Thou art put among his children; among his children to whom he is married. "Turn O backsliding children, for I am married unto you."

3. Yea, after all this, as if his heart was so full of grace for them, that he was pressed until he had uttered it before them, he adds, "Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding."

4. Nay, farther, the Lord hath considered, that the shame of thy sin hath stopped thy mouth, and made thee almost a prayerless man: and therefore he saith unto thee, "Take with you words and turn unto the Lord, and say unto him, take away

all iniquity, and receive us graciously." See his grace, that himself should put words of encouragement into the heart of a backslider: as he saith in another place, "I taught Ephraim to go, taking him by the arms." This is teaching him to go indeed, to hold him up by the arms; by the chin, as we say.

From what has been said, I conclude, even as I said before, and the him in the text, and "him that cometh," includeth both these sorts of sinners, and therefore both should freely come.

*Question.* But where doth Jesus Christ in all the words of the New Testament, expressly speak to a returning backslider with words of grace and peace? for what you have urged as yet, from the New Testament, is nothing but consequences drawn from this text. Indeed, it is a full text for carnal, ignorant sinners, that come; but to me who am a backslider, it yieldeth but little relief.

*Answer* 1. How! but little encouragement from the text, when it is said, "I will in no wise cast out!" What more could have been said? what is here omitted that might have been inserted, to make the promise more full and free? Nay, take all the promises in the Bible, all the freest promises, with all the variety of expressions of what nature or extent soever, and they can but amount to the expressions of this very promise, "I will in no wise cast out:" will for nothing, by no means, upon no account, however they have sinned, however they have backslidden, however they have provoked, cast out the coming sinner. But,

2. Thou sayest, where doth Jesus Christ, in all the words of the New Testament, speak to a returning backslider with words of grace and peace; that is, under the name of a backslider?

*Answer.* Where there is such plenty of examples in receiving backsliders, there is the less need for express words to that intent: one promise, as the text is, with those examples that are annexed, are instead of many promises. And besides; I reckon that the act of receiving is as so much, if not of more encouragement, than is a bare promise to receive; for receiving is as the promise to receive; for receiving is as the promise, and the fulfilling of it too; so that in the Old Testament thou hast the promise, and in the New, the fulfilling of it; and that in divers examples.

1. In Peter. Peter denied his master, once, twice, thrice, and that with an open oath; yet Christ receives him again without any the least hesitation or stick. Yea, he slips, stumbles, falls again, in downright dissimulation, and that to the hurt and fall of many others; but neither of this doth



Christ make a bar to his salvation, but receives him again at his return, as if he knew nothing of the fault.

2. The rest of his disciples, even all of them, did backslide, and leave the Lord Jesus in his greatest straits: "Then all the disciples forsook him and fled; they returned (as he had foretold) every one to his own, and left him alone;" but this also he passes over as a very light matter: not that it was so indeed in itself, but the abundance of grace that was in him did lightly roll it away; for after his resurrection, when first he appeared unto them, he gives them not the least check for their perfidious dealings with him, but salutes them with words of grace, saying, "All hail, be not afraid, peace be to you, all power in heaven and earth is given unto me." True, he rebuked them for their unbelief, for the which also thou deservest the same: for it is unbelief that alone puts Christ and his benefits from us.

3. The man that after a large profession lay with his father's wife, committed a high transgression, even such a one that at that day was not heard of, no not among the Gentiles. Wherefore this was a desperate backsliding; yet, at his return he was received, and accepted again to mercy.

4. The thief that stole was bid to steal no more: not at all doubting, but that Christ was ready to forgive him this act of backsliding.

Now all these are examples, particular instances of Christ's readiness to receive the backsliders to mercy; and observe it, examples and proofs that he hath done so, are to our unbelieving hearts, stronger encouragements than bare promises, that so he will do. But again, the Lord Jesus hath added to these, for the encouragement of returning backsliders, to come to him.

1. A call to come, and he will receive them. Wherefore, New-Testament backsliders have encouragement to come.

2. A declaration of readiness to receive them that come, as here in the text, and in many other places, is plain; therefore, "Set thee up these marks, make thee those high heaps, (of the golden grace of the gospel,) set thine heart towards the highway, even the way that thou wentest (when thou didst backslide;) turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities."

And him that cometh. He saith not and him that talketh, that professeth, that maketh a show, a noise or the like; but him that cometh. Christ will take leave to judge, who, among the many that make a noise, they be that indeed are coming to him. It is not him that saith he comes, nor him of whom others affirm that he

comes; but him that Christ himself shall say doth come, that is concerned in this text. When the woman that had a bloody issue came to him for cure, there were others as well as she, that made a great bustle about him, that touched, yea, thronged him. Ah, but Christ could distinguish this woman from them all; "And he looked round about upon them all, to see her that had done this thing."

He was not concerned with the thronging, or touching of the rest; for theirs were but accidental, or at best void of that which made her touch acceptable. Wherefore, Christ must be judge who they be that in truth are coming to him: "Every man's ways are right in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits." It standeth therefore every one in hand to be certain of their coming to Jesus Christ: for as thy coming is, so shall the salvation be: if thou comest indeed, thy salvation shall be indeed; but if thou comest but in outward appearance, so shall thy salvation be: but of coming, see before, as also afterwards, in the use and application.

"And him that cometh to me."—These words to me are also to be well heeded; for by them, as he secureth those that come to him, so also he shows himself unconcerned with those that in their coming rest short, to turn aside to others: for you must know, that every one that comes, comes not to Jesus Christ; some that come, come to Moses, and to his law, and there take up for life; with these Christ is not concerned; with these his promise has not to do. "Christ is become of none effect unto you, whoso of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Again some that come, come no farther than the gospel ordinances, and there stay; they come not through them to Christ; with these neither is he concerned; nor will their "Lord, Lord," avail them any thing in the great and dismal day. A man may come too, and also go from the place and ordinances of worship, and yet not be remembered by Christ. "So I saw the wicked buried, said Solomon, who had come and gone from the place of the Holy, and they were forgotten in the city, where they had so done; this is also vanity."

To me.—These words, therefore, are by Jesus Christ very warily put in, and serve for caution and encouragement; for caution, lest we take up in our coming any thing short of Christ; and for encouragement to those that shall in their coming, come past all till they come to Jesus Christ: "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Reader, if thou lovest thy soul, take this caution kindly at the hands of Jesus Christ. Thou seest thy sickness, thy wound, thy

necessity of salvation; well, go not to king Jareb, for he cannot heal thee, nor cure thee of thy wound. Take the caution, I say, lest Christ, instead of being a Saviour unto thee, becomes a lion, a young lion to tear thee, and go away.

There is a coming, but not to the Most High; there is a coming, but not with the whole heart, but as it were feignedly; therefore take the caution kindly.

"And him that cometh to me."—Christ, as a Saviour, will stand alone, because his own arm alone hath brought salvation unto him: he will not be joined with Moses, nor suffer John Baptist to be tabernacled by him: I say they must vanish, for Christ will stand alone; yea, God the Father will have it so; therefore, they must be parted from him, and a voice from heaven must come to bid the disciples hear only the beloved Son. Christ will not suffer any law, or ordinance, statute or judgment, to be partners with him in the salvation of the sinner. Nay, he saith not, And him that cometh to my word; but, And him that cometh to me. The words of Christ, even his most blessed and free promises, such as this in the text, are not the Saviour of the world; for that is Christ himself, Christ himself only. The promises, therefore, are but to encourage coming sinners to come to Jesus Christ, and not to rest in them short of salvation by men. "And him that cometh to me."—The man, therefore, that comes aright, casts all things behind his back and looketh at (nor hath his expectations from ought but) the Son of God alone; and David said, "My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from him: he only is my rock, and my salvation; he is my defence, I shall not be moved." His eye is to Christ, his heart is to Christ, and his expectation is from him, from him only.

Therefore, the man that comes to Christ is one that hath had deep considerations of his own sins, slighting thoughts of his own righteousness, and high thoughts of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ; yea, he sees, as I have said, more virtue in the blood of Christ to save him, than there is in all his sins to damn him. He therefore setteth Christ before his eyes; there is nothing in heaven or earth, he knows, that can save his soul and secure him from the wrath of God, but Christ; that is, nothing but his personal righteousness and blood."

"And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."—"In no wise:" by these words there is something expressed and something implied.

1. That which is expressed is Jesus Christ, his unchangeable resolution to save the coming sinner: I will in no wise reject

him, or deny him the benefit of my death, and righteousness. This word, therefore, is like that which he speaks of the everlasting damnation of the sinner in hell-fire; "He shall by no means depart thence;" that is never, never come out again; no, not to all eternity. So that as he that is condemned into hell-fire hath no ground of hope for his deliverance thence; so him that cometh to Christ hath no ground to fear he shall ever be cast in thither.

Thus saith the Lord, "If heaven above can be measured, or the foundation of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast away all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord."

Thus saith the Lord, "If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob." But heaven cannot be measured, nor the foundations of the earth searched out beneath; his covenant is also with day and night, and he hath appointed the ordinances of heaven; therefore, he will not cast away the seed of Jacob, who are the coming ones, but will certainly save them from the dreadful wrath to come. By this, therefore, it is manifest, that it was not the greatness of sin, nor the long continuance in it; no, nor yet the backsliding, nor the pollution of thy nature, that can put a bar in against, or be a hindrance of the salvation of the coming sinner: for, if indeed this could be, then would this solemn and absolute determination of the Lord Jesus, of itself, fall to the ground, and be made of none effect: "But this counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure," that is, his pleasure is this, for his promise, as to this irreversible conclusion, arises of his pleasure, he will stand to it, and will fulfil it, because it is his pleasure.

Suppose that one man had the sins, or as many sins as a hundred, and another should have a hundred times as many as he, yet if they come, this word, "I will in no wise cast out," secures them both alike.

Suppose a man has a desire to be saved, and for that purpose is coming in truth to Jesus Christ, but he, by his debauched life, has damned many in hell; why, the door of hope is by these words set as open for him as it is for him that has not the thousandth part of his transgressions. "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Suppose a man is coming to Christ to be saved, and hath nothing but sin, and an ill-spent life, to bring with him; why, let him come and welcome to Jesus Christ, "and he will in no wise cast him out." Is not this love that passeth knowledge? and is not this love the wonderment of angels? and



is not this love worthy of all acceptation at the hands and hearts of all coming sinners?

2. That which is implied in the words is,

1st. The coming souls have those that continually lie at Jesus Christ, to cast them off.

2dly. The coming souls are afraid that those will prevail with Christ to cast them off.

For these words are spoken to satisfy us, and to stay up our spirits against these two dangers: "I will in no wise cast out."

1st. For the *first*, coming souls have those that continually lie at Jesus Christ, to cast them off.

And there are three things that thus bend themselves against the coming sinner.

1. There is the devil, the accuser of the brethren, that accuses them before God, day and night. This prince of darkness is unwearied in this work: he doth it, as you see, day and night; that is, without ceasing. He continually puts in his caveats against thee, if so be he may prevail. How did he play it against that good man Job, if possibly he might have obtained his destruction in hell-fire? He objected against him, that he served not God for nought, and tempted God to put forth his hand against him, urging, that if he did it, he would curse him to his face; and all this, as God witnesseth, "he did without a cause." How did he play it with Christ against Joshua the high-priest? "And he showed me Joshua," saith the prophet, "the high-priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him."

"To resist him;" that is, to prevail with the Lord Jesus Christ to resist him; objecting the uncleanness, and unlawful marriage of his sons with the Gentiles; for that was the crime that Satan laid against them. Yea, and for aught I know, Joshua was also guilty of the fact; but if not of that, of crimes no whit inferior; for he was clothed with filthy garments, as he stood before the angel. Neither had he one word to say in vindication of himself, against all that this wicked one had to say against him. But notwithstanding that, he came off well; but he might for it thank a good Lord Jesus, because he did not resist him, but, contrariwise, took up his cause, pleaded against the devil, excusing his infirmity, and put justifying robes upon him before his adversary's face.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? And he answered and spake to those that stood before him, saying, Take away the

filthy garment from him; and to him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquities to pass from thee, and will clothe thee with a change of raiment."

Again; how did Satan ply in against Peter, when he desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat? that is, if possible, sever all grace from his heart, and leave him nothing but flesh and filth, to the end that he might make the Lord Jesus loathe and abhor him. "Simon, Simon," said Christ, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat." But did he prevail against him? No: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." As who should say, Simon, Satan hath desired me that I would give thee up to him, and not only thee, but all the rest of thy brethren, (for that the word *you* imports;) but I will not leave thee in his hand: I have prayed for thee, thy faith shall not fail. I will secure thee to the heavenly inheritance.

2. As Satan, so every sin of the coming sinner comes in with a voice against him, if perhaps they may prevail with Christ to cast off the soul. When Israel was coming out of Egypt to Canaan, how many times had their sins thrown them out of the mercy of God, had not Moses, as a type of Christ, stood in the breach to turn away his wrath from them! Our iniquities testify against us, and would certainly prevail against us, to our utter rejection and damnation, had we not an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The sins of the old world cried them down to hell; the sins of Sodom fetched upon them fire from heaven, which devoured them; the sins of the Egyptians cried them down to hell, because they came not to Jesus Christ for life. Coming sinner, thy sins are no whit less than any; nay, perhaps they are as big as all theirs. Why is it, then, that thou livest when they are dead, and that thou hast a promise of pardon when they had not? "Why, thou art coming to Jesus Christ," and therefore sin shall not be thy ruin.

3. As Satan and sin, so the law of Moses, as it is a perfect holy law, hath a voice against you before the face of God. "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses's law." Yea, it accuseth all men of transgression, that have sinned against it; for as long as sin is sin, there will be a law to accuse for sin. But this accusation shall not prevail against the coming sinner, because it is Christ that died, and that ever lives, to make intercession for them that "come to God by him."

These things, I say, do accuse us before Christ Jesus; yea, and also to our own faces, if perhaps they might prevail against us. But these words, "I will in no wise

cast out," secureth the coming sinner from them all.

The coming sinner is not saved, because there is none that comes in against him; but because the Lord Jesus will not hear their accusations, will not cast out the coming sinner.

When Shimei came down to meet king David, and to ask pardon for his rebellion, up starts Abishai, and put in his caveat, saying, Shall not Shemei die for this? This is the case of him that comes to Christ: he hath this Abishai, and that Abishai, that presently steps in against him, saying, shall not this rebel's sin destroy him in hell? Read farther: "But David answered, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be adversaries to me? Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel, for do I not know, that I am king this day over Israel?"

That is Christ's answer by the text, to all that accuse the coming Shimeis: What have I to do with you, that accuse the coming sinners to me? I count you adversaries, that are against my showing mercy to them. Do not I know, that I am exalted this day to be king of righteousness and king of peace? "I will in no wise cast them out."

2dly. But again, these words do closely imply, that the coming souls are afraid, that these accusers will prevail against them, as is evident, because the text is spoken for their relief and succor: for that need not be, if they that are coming are not subject to fear, and despond upon this account. Alas, there is guilt; and the curse lies upon the conscience of the coming sinner.

Besides, he is conscious to himself what a villain, what a wretch he hath been against God and Christ. Also he now knows, by woful experience, how he hath been at Satan's beck, and at the motion of every lust. He hath now also new thoughts of the holiness and justice of God: also he feels, that he cannot forbear sinning against him: "for the motions of sin, which are by the law, do still work in his members, to bring forth fruit unto death." But none of this need discourage, since we have so good, so tender-hearted, and so faithful a Jesus to come to, who will rather overthrow heaven and earth, than suffer a tittle of this text to fail. "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Now we have yet to inquire into two things that lie in these words, to which there hath been nothing said: as, 1. What it is to cast out; 2. How it appears that Christ hath power to save or cast out.

For the first of these—What it is to cast

out. To this I will speak, 1. Generally; 2. More particularly.

1. To cast out, is to slight, and despise, and condemn; and as it is said of Saul's shield, "it was vilely cast away:" that is, slighted and contemned. Thus it is with the sinners that come not to Jesus Christ; He slights, despises, and condemns them; that is, "casts them away."

2. Things cast away are reputed as the dirt of the street. And thus it shall be with the men that come not to Jesus Christ; they shall be counted as the dirt in the streets.

3. To be cast out, or off, it is to be abhorred, not to be pitied; but to be put to a perpetual shame.

But, more particularly, to come to the text. The casting out here mentioned, is not limited to this or the other evil; therefore it must be extended to the most extreme and utmost misery. Or, thus:

He that cometh to Christ, shall not want any thing that may make him gospelly-happy in this world, or that which is to come; nor shall he want any thing that cometh not, that may make him spiritually and eternally miserable.

But, further; as it is to be generally taken, so it respecteth things that shall be hereafter.

For the things that are now, they are either, 1. More general; 2. Or more particular.

First, More general, thus:

1. It is to be cast out of the presence and favor of God.

Thus was Cain cast out: "thou hast driven" (or cast) "me out this day; from thy face" (that is, from thy favor) "shall I be hid." A dreadful complaint! but the effect of a more dreadful judgment.

2. "To be cast out," is to be cast out of God's sight. God will look after them no more, care for them no more; nor will he watch over them any more for good. Now they that are so, are left like blind men, to wander and fall into the pit of hell. This therefore is also a sad judgment! therefore here is the mercy of him that cometh to Christ. He shall not be left to wander at uncertainties. The Lord Jesus Christ will keep him, as a shepherd doth his sheep. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

3. "To be cast out," is to be denied a place in God's house, and to be left as fugitives and vagabonds, to pass a little time away in this miserable life, and after that to go down to the dead. Therefore, here is the benefit of him that cometh to Christ, he shall not be denied a place in God's house. They shall not be left like vagabonds in the world. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."



4. In a word, "To be cast out," is to be rejected as are the fallen angels: for their eternal damnation began at their being cast down from heaven to hell. So then, "Not to be cast out," is to have a place, a house and habitation there; and to have a share in the privileges of elect angels.

These words, therefore, "I will not cast out," will prove great words one day, to them that come to Jesus Christ.

Secondly, And more particularly:

1. Christ hath everlasting life for him that cometh to him, and he shall never perish: "for he will in no wise cast him out:" but for the rest, they are rejected, *cast out*, and must be damned.

2. Christ hath everlasting righteousness to clothe them with, that come to him, and they shall be covered with it as with a garment; but the rest shall be found in the filthy rags of their own stinking pollutions, and shall be wrapped up in them, as in a winding sheet, and so bear their shame before the Lord, and also before the angels.

3. Christ hath precious blood, that, like an open fountain, stands free for him to wash in, that comes to him for life: "and he will in no wise cast him out:" but they that come not to him are rejected from a share therein, and are left to ireful vengeance for their sins.

4. Christ hath precious promises, and they shall have a share in them that come to him for life; "for he will in no wise cast them out." But they that come not, can have no share in them, because they are true only in him: for in him, and only in him, all the promises are *yea* and *amen*. Wherefore, they that come not to him, are no whit the better for them.

5. Christ hath also fullness of grace in himself for them that come to him for life: "and he will in no wise cast them out." But those that come not unto him, are left in their graceless state; and as Christ leaves them, death, hell, and judgment, finds them. "He that findeth me," saith Christ, "findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord; but he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul. All that hate me, love death."

6. Christ is an intercessor, and ever liveth to make intercession for them that come to God by him; "but their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another" (or other) "goods," (their sins and lusts.) "Their drink-offerings will he not suffer, nor take up their names into his lips."

7. Christ hath wonderful love, bowels, and compassion, for those that come to him: for "he will in no wise cast them out." But the rest will find him a lion rampant; he will one day tear them all to pieces. "Now consider this," saith he, "ye that

forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you."

8. Christ is known by, and for his sake those that come to him have their persons and performances accepted of the Father: "and he will in no wise cast them out;" but the rest must fly to the rocks and mountains for shelter, but all in vain, to hide them from his face and wrath.

But again; these words, *cast out*, have a special look to what will be hereafter, even at the day of judgment: for then, and not till then, will be the great *anathema* and *casting out* made manifest, even manifest by execution. Therefore here to speak to this, and that under these two heads: as, 1. Of the casting out itself; 2. Of the place into which they shall be cast, that shall then be cast out.

First, the casting out itself standeth in two things:

1. In a preparatory work.

2. In the manner of executing the act.

The preparatory work standeth in these three things:

1. It standeth in their separation that have not come to him, from them that have at that day. Or thus; at the day of the great casting out, those that have not, *now*, come to him, shall be separated from them that have; for them that have, "he will not cast out." "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats."

This dreadful separation therefore shall then be made betwixt them that, *now*, come to Christ, and them that come not: and good reason; for since they would not with us come to him, *now* they have time; why should they stand with us, when judgment is come?

2. They shall be placed before him according to their condition; they that have come to him, in great dignity, even at his right hand; "for he will in no wise cast them out;" but the rest shall be set at his left hand, the place of disgrace and shame; for they did not come to him for life.

Distinguished also shall they be by fit terms; these that come to him he calleth the sheep, but the rest are frowish goats, "and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats; and the sheep will be set on the right hand," (next heaven gate, for they came to him,) "but the goats on the left;" to go from him into hell, because they are not of his sheep.

3. Then will Christ proceed to conviction of those that came not to him, and will

say, "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in," or did not come unto me. Their excuse of themselves he will slight as dirt, and proceed to their final judgment.

Now when these wretched rejectors of Christ shall thus be set before him in their sins, and convicted, this is the preparatory work upon which follows the manner of executing the act which will be done.

1. In the presence of all the holy angels.

2. In the presence of all them that in their lifetime came to him, by saying unto them, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," with the reason annexed to it: for you were cruel to me and mine, particularly discovered in these words: "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."

Secondly, Now it remains that we speak of the place into which these shall be cast, which in the general you have heard already, to wit, the fire prepared for the devil and his angels. But, in particular, it is thus described:

1. It is called Tophet: "For Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king," the Lucifer, "it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it."

2. It is called Hell. "It is better for thee to enter into life, halt or lame, than having two feet to be cast into hell."

3. It is called "the wine-press of the wrath of God." And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, (that is, them that did not come to Christ,) and cast them out into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. Rev. xiv. 19.

4. It is called "a lake of fire." And whatsoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire. Rev. xx. 15.

5. It is called a pit. "Thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend to heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

6. It is called "a bottomless pit, out of which the smoke and the locust came, and into which the great dragon was cast:" and it is called *bottomless*, to show the endlessness of the fall that they will have into it, that come not in the acceptable time to Jesus Christ.

7. It is called "outer darkness." "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness, and cast ye the unprofitable ser-

vant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

8. It is called "a furnace of fire." As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world: the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and he shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. And again, So shall it be in the end of the world; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Matt. xiii. 41—51.

Lastly, It may not be amiss, if in the conclusion of this, I show in a few words, to what the things that torment them in this state, are compared. Indeed some of them have been occasionally mentioned already; as that they are compared,

1. To wood that burneth.

2. To fire.

3. To fire and brimstone. But,

4. It is compared to a worm, to a gnawing worm, a never-dying gnawing worm: "They are cast into hell, where their worm dieth not."

5. It is called "unquenchable fire:" "He will gather his wheat into his garner; but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

6. It is called "everlasting destruction." The Lord Jesus shall descend from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Thes. i. 7, 8.

7. It is called "wrath without mixture," and is given them in the cup of his indignation. "If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive the mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture, in the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

8. It is called "The second death." "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire; this is the second death. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power."

9. It is called "eternal damnation." "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but in danger of eternal damnation."

Oh! these three words!

"Everlasting punishment!"

"Eternal damnation!"



And, "For ever and ever!"

How will they gnaw and eat up all the expectation of the misery of the cast-away sinners! "And the smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night," &c.

Their behavior in hell is set forth by four things, as I know of; 1. By calling for help and relief in vain: 2. By weeping: 3. By wailing: 4. By gnashing of teeth.

And now we come to the second thing that is to be inquired into; namely, How it appears that Christ hath power to save, or to cast out; for by these words, "I will in no wise cast out," he declareth that he hath power to do both.

Now this inquiry admits us to search into two things: 1. How it appears that he hath power to save; 2. How it appears that he hath power to cast out.

That he hath power to save, appears by that which follows:

1. To speak only of him as he is mediator; he was authorized to this blessed work by his Father, before the world began. Hence the apostle said, "He hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world," with all those things that effectually will produce our salvation. Read the same chapter, with 2 Tim. i. 9.

2. He was promised to our first parents, that he should, in the fulness of time, bruise the serpent's head; and, as Paul expounds it, redeem them that were under the law; hence, since that time, he hath been reckoned as slain for our sins. By which means all the fathers under the first testament were secured from the wrath to come; hence he is called, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

3. Moses gave testimony of him by the types and shadows, and bloody sacrifices, that he commanded from the mouth of God, to be in use to the support of his people's faith, until the time of reformation; which was the time of this Jesus his death. Heb. 9th and 10th chap.

At the time of his birth it was testified of him by the angel, "That he should save his people from their sins."

5. It is testified of him in the days of his flesh, that he had power on earth to forgive sins.

6. It is testified also of him by the Apostle Peter: "That God hath exalted him with his own right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

7. In a word, this is every where testified of both in the Old Testament and in the New.

And good reason that he should be acknowledged and trusted in as a Saviour.

1. He came down from heaven to be a Saviour.

2. He was anointed when on earth to be a Saviour.

3. He did the works of a Saviour. As, 1. He fulfilled the law, and became the end of it for righteousness, for them that believe in him.

2. He laid down his life as a Saviour; he gave his life as a ransom for many.

3. He hath abolished death, destroyed the devil, put away sin, got the keys of hell and death, ascended into heaven; is there accepted of God, and did sit at the right hand as a Saviour; and that because his sacrifice for sins pleased God.

4. God hath sent out and proclaimed him as a Saviour, and tells the world that we have redemption through his blood, that he will justify us, if we believe in his blood, and that he can faithfully and justly do it. Yea, God doth beseech us to be reconciled to him by his Son; which could not be, if he were not anointed by him to this very end, and also if his works and undertakings were not accepted of him, considered as a Saviour.

God hath already received millions of souls into his paradise, because they have received this Jesus for a Saviour; and is resolved to cut them off, and to cast them out of his presence, that will not take him for a Saviour.

I intend brevity here; therefore a word to the second, and so conclude.

How it appears that he hath power to cast out.

This appears also by what follows:

1. The Father, (for the service that he had done him as a Saviour,) hath made him Lord of all, even Lord of quick and dead. "For to this end, Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

2. The Father hath left it with him to quicken whom he will, to wit, with saving grace, and to cast out whom he will, for their rebellion against him.

3. The Father hath made him judge of quick and dead, hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and appointed that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.

4. God will judge the world by this man: the day is appointed for judgment, and he is appointed for judge. "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man."

Therefore we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive for the things done in the body, according to what they have done. If they have closed with him, heaven and salvation; if they have not, hell and damnation.

And for these reasons he must be judge:

1. Because of his humiliation; because of his Father's word he humbled himself,

and he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: "Therefore God hath exalted him; and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow; both of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

This hath respect to his being judge, and his sitting in judgment upon angels and men.

2. That all men might honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."

3. Because of his righteous judgment, this work is fit for no creature; it is only fit for the Son of God. For he will reward every man according to his ways.

4. Because he is the Son of man. He hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Thus have I in brief passed through this text by way of explication. My next work is to speak to it by way of observation: but I shall be also as brief in that as the nature of the thing will admit.

*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*—John vi. 37.

And now I come to some observations, and a little briefly to speak to them, and then conclude the whole.

The words thus explained, afford us many, some of which are these:

1. That God the Father, and Christ his Son, are two distinct persons in the Godhead.

2. That by them, (not excluding the Holy Ghost,) is contrived and determined the salvation of fallen mankind.

3. That this contrivance resolved itself into a covenant between these persons in the Godhead, which standeth in giving on the Father's part, and receiving on the Son's. "All that the Father giveth me," &c.

4. That every one that the Father hath given to Christ (according to the mind of God in the text) shall certainly come to him.

5. That coming to Jesus Christ is therefore not by the will, wisdom, or power of man: but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father: "All that the Father giveth me shall come."

6. That Jesus Christ will be careful to receive, and will not in any wise reject those that come, or are coming to him. "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

There are, besides these, some other truths implied in the words. As,

7. They that are coming to Jesus Christ, are oftentimes heartily afraid that he will not receive them.

8. Jesus Christ would not have them, that in truth are coming to him, once think that he will cast them out.

These observations lie all of them in the words, and are plentifully confirmed by the scriptures of truth; but I shall not at this time speak to them all, but shall pass by the first, second, third, fourth, and sixth, partly because I design brevity, and partly because they are touched upon in the explicatory part of the text. I shall therefore begin with the fifth observation, and so make that first in order in the following discourse.

1. First, then coming to Christ is not by the will, wisdom, or power of man, but by the gift, promise and drawing of the Father. This observation standeth of two parts.

1. The coming to Christ is not by the will, wisdom, or power of man:

2. But by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father.

That the text carrieth this truth in its bosom, you will find if you look into the explication of the first part thereof before; I shall therefore here follow the method propounded, viz. show,

1. That coming to Christ is not by the will, wisdom, or power of man. This is true, because the word doth positively say it is not.

First. It denieth it to be the will of man. "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man." And again, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth."

Second. It denieth it to be of the wisdom of man, as is manifest from these considerations:

1. In the wisdom of God it pleased him, that the world by wisdom should not know him. Now if by their wisdom they cannot know him, it follows, by that wisdom they cannot come unto him; for coming to him, is not before, but after some knowledge of him.

2. The wisdom of man in God's account as to the knowledge of Christ, is reckoned foolishness. "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" and again, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

If God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world; and again, if the wisdom of this world is foolishness with him, then verily it is not likely, that by that a sinner shall become so prudent, as to come to Jesus Christ, especially if you consider,

3. That the doctrine of a crucified Christ, and so of salvation by him, is the



very thing that is counted foolishness to the wisdom of the world. Now, if the very doctrine of a crucified Christ be counted foolishness by the wisdom of this world, it cannot be that by that wisdom a man should be drawn out in his soul to come to him.

4. God counted the wisdom of this world one of his greatest enemies; therefore by that wisdom no man can come to Jesus Christ. For it is not likely that one of God's greatest enemies should draw a man to that which best of all pleaseth God, as coming to Christ doth. Now, that God counteth the wisdom of this world one of his greatest enemies, is evident.

1. For that it casteth the greatest contempt upon his Son's undertaking, afore is proved, in that it counts his crucifixion foolishness; though that be one of the highest demonstrations of divine wisdom.

2. Because God hath threatened to destroy it, and bring it to nought, and cause it to perish; which surely he would not do, was it not an enemy, would it direct men to, and cause them to close with Jesus Christ.

3. He hath rejected it from helping in the ministry of his word, as a fruitless business, and a thing that comes to nought.

4. Because it causeth to perish those that seek it and pursue it.

5. And God hath proclaimed, that if any man will be wise in this world, he must be a fool in the wisdom of this world, and that is the way to be wise in the wisdom of God. "If any man will be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

Thirdly. Coming to Christ is not by the power of man. This is evident, partly,

1. From that which goeth before: for man's power, in the putting forth of it, in this matter, is either stirred up with love, or sense of necessity; but the wisdom of this world neither gives man love to, or sense of a need of Jesus Christ: therefore his power lieth still, as from that.

2. What power has he that is dead, as every natural man spiritually is, even dead in trespasses and sins? Dead, even as dead to God's New Testament things, as he that is in his grave is dead to the things of this world. What power has he then, whereby to come to Jesus Christ?

3. God forbids the mighty man's glory in his strength; and says positively, "By strength shall no man prevail:" and again, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

4. Paul acknowledgeth that man, nay, converted man, of himself, hath not a sufficiency of power in himself to think a good thought; if not to do that which is least,

for to think is less than to come; no man by his own power can come to Jesus Christ.

5. Hence we are said to be made willing to come, by the power of God; to be raised from a state of sin to a state of grace, by the power of God; and to believe, that is, to come, through the exceeding working of his mighty power.

But this needeth not, if either man had power or will to come, or so much as graciously to think of being willing to come (of themselves) to Jesus Christ.

I should now come to the power of the second part of the observation, but that is occasionally done already, in the explicative part of the text; to which I refer the reader: for I shall here only give thee one or two more to the same purpose, and so come to the use and application.

1. It is expressly said, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him. By this text there is not only insinuated, that in man is want of power, but of will, to come to Jesus Christ: they must be drawn; they come not if they be not drawn. And observe, it is not man, no, nor all the angels of heaven, that can draw one sinner to Jesus Christ. "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him."

2. Again, "No man can come to me, except it were given him of my Father." It is an heavenly gift that maketh man come to Jesus Christ.

3. Again, "It is written in the prophets, they shall be all taught of God; every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh to me."

I shall not enlarge, but shall make some use and application, and so come to the next observation.

1. Is it so? Is coming to Jesus Christ, not by the will, wisdom, or power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then they are to blame that cry up the will, wisdom, and power of man, as things sufficient to bring men to Christ.

There are some men who think they may not be contradicted, when they plead for the will, wisdom, and power of man in reference to the things that are of the kingdom of Christ: but I will say to such a man, he never yet came to understand, that himself is, what the scripture teacheth concerning him: neither did he ever know what coming to Christ is by the teaching gift, and drawing of the Father. He is such a one that hath set up God's enemy in opposition to him, and that continueth in such acts of defiance; and what his end without a new birth, will be, the scripture teacheth also: but we will pass this.

2. Is it so? Is coming to Jesus Christ, by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father,

er? Then let saints here learn to ascribe their coming to Christ, to the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father. Christian man, bless God, who hath given thee to Jesus Christ, by promise; and again bless God for that he hath drawn thee to him. And why is it thee? Why not another? O that the glory of electing love should rest upon thy head, and that the glory of the exceeding grace of God should take hold of thy heart, and bring thee to Jesus Christ!

3. Is it so, that coming to Jesus Christ, is by thy Father, as aforesaid! Then this should teach us to set a high esteem upon them that are indeed coming to Jesus Christ: I say, a high esteem on them, for the sake of him, by virtue of whose grace they are made to come to Jesus Christ.

We see that when men by the help of human abilities, do arrive at the knowledge of, and bring to pass that which, when done, is a wonder to the world, how he that did it is esteemed and commended: yea, how are his wits, parts, industry, and unweariableness in all, admired; and yet the man, as to this, is but of the world, and his work the effect of natural ability: the things also attained by him end in vanity and vexation of spirit. Further, perhaps in the pursuit of these his achievements, he sins against God, wastes his time vainly, and at long run, loses his soul by neglecting of better things: yet he is admired! But I say, if this man's parts, labor, diligence, and the like, will bring him to such applause and esteem in the world, what esteem should we have of such an one, that is, by the gift, promise, and power of God, coming to Jesus Christ?

1. This is a man with which God is, in whom God works and walks; a man whose motion is governed and steered by the mighty hand of God, and the effectual working of his power: here's a man!

2. This man, by the power of God's might which worketh in him, is able to cast a whole world behind him, with all the lusts and pleasures of it; and to charge through all the difficulties that men and devils can set against him: here's a man!

3. This man is travelling to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, to God the judge of all, and to Jesus: here's a man!

4. This man can look upon death with comfort, can laugh at destruction when it cometh, and long to hear the sound of the last trumpet, and to see the judge coming in the clouds of heaven: here's a man indeed!

Let Christians then esteem each other as such: I know you do; but do it more and

more. And that you may consider these two or three things:

1. These are the objects of Christ's esteem. Matt. xii. 48: chap. xv. 22—29; Luke vii. 9.

2. These are the objects of the esteem of angels. Dan. ix. 12; chap. x. 11; and xii. 4; Heb. i. 14.

3. These have been the objects of the esteem of heathens, when but convinced about them. Dan. v. 10; Acts. v. 15; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

"Let each of you then esteem each other better than themselves." Phil. iii. 2.

4. Again, Is it so, that no man comes to Jesus Christ, by the will, wisdom, and power of man, but by the gift, power, and drawing of the Father? Then this shows us how horribly ignorant of this such are, who make the men that are coming to Christ the object of their contempt and rage. These are also unreasonable and wicked men: "Men in whom is no faith." 1 Thess. iii. 2.

Sinners, did you but know what a blessed thing it is to come to Jesus Christ, and that by the help and drawing of the Father they do indeed come to him, you would hang and burn in hell a thousands years before you would turn your spirits as you do, against him that God is drawing to Jesus Christ, and also against the God that draws him.

But, faithless sinner, let us a little expostulate the matter. What hath this man done against thee, that is coming to Jesus Christ? Why dost thou make him the object of thy scorn? Doth his coming to Jesus Christ offend thee? Doth his pursuing of his own salvation offend thee? Doth his forsaking of his sins and pleasures offend thee?

Poor coming man! "Thou sacrificeth the abominations of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone thee?"

But I say, why offended at this? Is he ever the worse for coming to Jesus Christ, or for loving and serving of Jesus Christ, or is he ever the more a fool, for flying from that which will drown thee in hell-fire, and for seeking eternal life? Besides, pray sirs, consider it; this he doth not of himself, but by the drawing of the Father. Come, let me tell thee in thine ear, thou that wilt not come to him thyself, and him that would, thou hinderest.

1. Thou shalt be judged for one that hath hated, maligned, and reproached Jesus Christ, to whom this poor sinner is coming.

2. Thou shalt be judged too, for one that hath hated the Father, by whose powerful drawing the sinner doth come.

3. Thou shalt be taken, and judged, for one that hath done despite to the Spirit of



grace in him, that is by its help coming to Jesus Christ. What sayest thou now? Wilt thou stand by thy doings? Wilt thou continue to condemn and reproach the living God? Thinkest thou that thou shalt weather it out well enough at the day of judgment? "Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee, saith the Lord?"

4. Is it so, that no man comes to Jesus Christ by the will, wisdom, and power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then this sheweth us how it comes to pass, that weak means are so powerful as to bring men out of their sins, to a hearty pursuit after Jesus Christ. When God bid Moses speak to the people, he said, "I will speak with thee." When God speaks, when God works, who can let it? None, none; then the work goes on. Elias threw his mantle upon the shoulders of Elisha; and what a wonderful work followed! When Jesus fell in with the crowing of a cock, what work was there? O when God is in the means, then shall that means, be it never so weak and contemptible in itself, work wonders. 1 Kings xix. 19; Matt. xxvi. 74, 75; Mark xiv. 71, 72; Luke xxii. 61, 62.

The world understood not, nor believed, that the walls of Jericho shall fall at the sound of ram's horns: but when God will work, the means must be effectual. A word weakly spoken, spoken with difficulty, in temptation, and in the midst of great contempt and scorn, works wonders, if the Lord thy God will say so too.

5. Is it so? Doth no man come to Jesus Christ by the will, wisdom, and power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then here is room for Christians to stand and wonder at the effectual working of God's providence, that he hath made use of, as means to bring them to Jesus Christ.

For although men are drawn to Christ by the power of the Father, yet that power putteth forth itself in the use of means; and these means are diverse, sometimes this, sometimes that; for God is at liberty to work, by which, and when, and how he will; but let the means be what they will, and as contemptible as may be; yet God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and that out of weakness can make strong, can, nay, doth oftentimes, make use of every unlikely means to bring about the conversion and salvation of his people. Therefore you that are come to Christ, (and by unlikely means,) stay yourselves, and wonder, and wondering, magnify almighty power, by the work of which the means hath been made effectual to bring you to Jesus Christ.

What was the providence that God made use of, as a means either remote, or more near, to bring thee to Jesus Christ? Was it the removing of thy habitation, the change of thy condition, the loss of relations, estate, or the like? Was it the casting of thine eye upon some good book, the hearing of thy neighbors talk of heavenly things, the beholding of God's judgment as executed upon others, or thine own deliverance from them, or thy being strangely cast under the ministry of some godly man? O take notice of such providence or providences! They were sent and managed by mighty power to do thee good. God himself, I say, hath joined himself to this chariot; yea, and so blessed it, that it failed not to accomplish the thing for which he sent it.

God blesseth not to every one his providence in this manner. How many thousands are there in this world, that pass every day under the same providences! but God is not in them, to do that work by them as he hath done for thy poor soul, by his effectually working with them. O that Jesus Christ should meet thee in this providence, that dispensation, or the other ordinance! This is grace indeed! At this, therefore, it will be thy wisdom to admire, and for this to bless God.

Give me leave to give you a taste of some of those providences that have been effectual, through the management of God, to bring salvation to the souls of his people.

1. The first shall be that of the woman of Samaria. It must happen, that she must needs go out of the city to draw water (not before or after, but) just when Jesus Christ her Saviour was come from far, and sat to rest him (being weary) upon the well. What a blessed providence was this! Even a providence managed by the almighty wisdom, and almighty power, to the conversion and salvation of this poor creature. For by this providence was this poor creature and her Saviour brought together, that a blessed work might be fulfilled upon the woman, according to the purpose before determined of the Father. John iv.

2. What providence was it, that there should be a tree in the way for Zaccheus to climb, thereby to give Jesus opportunity to call that chief of the publicans home to himself, even before he came down therefrom.

3. Was it not wonderful, that the thief, which you read of in the gospel, should, by the providence of God, be cast into prison, to be condemned, even at that sessions that Christ himself was to die; nay, and that it should happen too, that they must be hanged together, that the thief might be in hearing and observing of Jesus in his last words, that he might be converted by him before his death? Luke xxii.

4. What a strange providence was it, and as strangely managed by God, that Onesimus, when he was run away from his master, should be taken, as I think, and cast into that very prison where Paul lay bound for the word of the gospel; that he might there be by him converted, and then sent home again to his master Philemon! "Behold, all things work together for good, to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Nay, I have myself known some that have been made to go to hear the word preached against their wills; others have gone not to hear, but to see and be seen; nay, to jeer and flout others, as also to catch and carp at things. Some also to feed their adulterous eyes with the sight of beautiful objects; and yet God hath made use of even these things, and even of the wicked and sinful proposals of sinners, to bring them under the grace that might save their souls.

7. Doth no man come to Jesus Christ, but by the drawing, &c. of the Father? Then let me here caution those poor sinners, that are spectators of the change that God hath wrought in them that are coming to Jesus Christ, not to attribute this work and change to other things and causes.

There are some poor sinners in the world, that plainly see a change, a mighty change, in their neighbors and relations that are coming to Jesus Christ. But as I said, they being ignorant, and not knowing whence it comes, and whither it goes, "for so is every one that is born of the Spirit," therefore they attribute this change to other causes: as, 1. Melancholy; 2. To sitting alone; 3. To overmuch reading; 4. To their going to too many sermons; 5. To too much studying, and musing on what they hear.

Also, they conclude on the other side,

1. That it is for want of merry company.

2. For want of physic, and therefore they advise them to leave off reading, going to sermons, the company of sober people, and to be merry, and go a gossiping, to busy themselves in the things of this world; not set musing alone, &c.

But come, poor ignorant sinner, let me deal with thee. It seems thou art turned counsellor for Satan: I tell thee, thou knowest not what thou dost. Take heed of spending thy judgment after this manner; thou judgest foolishly, and sayest in this, to every one that passeth by, thou art a fool.

What! count convictions for sin, mourning for sin, and repentance for sin, melancholy! This is like those that on the other side said, "These men are drunk with new wine," &c. Or, as he hath said, Paul was mad. Acts ii. 23; and xxvi. 24.

Poor ignorant sinner! canst thou judge no better? What! is sitting alone, pensive under God's hand, reading the scriptures, and hearing of sermons, &c. the way to be undone? The Lord open thine eyes, and make thee to see thine error: thou hast set thyself against God, thou hast despised the operations of his hands, thou attemptest to murder souls. What? canst thou give no better counsel touching those whom God hath wounded, than to send them to the ordinances of hell for help? Thou biddest them be merry and lightsome; but dost thou not know, that "the heart of fools is in the house of laughter?"

Thou biddest them shun the hearing of thundering preachers: "But is it not better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools?" Thou biddest them busy themselves in the things of this world; but dost thou not know that the Lord bids, "First seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof?"

Poor ignorant sinner, hear the counsel of God to such, and learn thyself to be wiser. "Is any afflicted? let him pray: Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Blessed is he that heareth me; and heareth for time to come. Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Search the scriptures; give attendance to reading. It is better to go to the house of mourning."

And wilt thou judge him that doth thus? Art thou almost like Elimas the sorcerer, that sought to turn the deputy from the faith? Thou seekest to pervert the right ways of the Lord: take heed lest some heavy judgment overtake thee. Acts xiii. 8-13.

What! teach men to quench convictions; take men off from a serious consideration of the evil of sin, of the terrors of the world to come, and how they shall escape the same? What! teach men to put God and his word out of their minds, by running to merry company, by running to the world, by gossiping, &c.? This is as much as to bid them say to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; or, what's the Almighty, that we should serve him? or, what profit have we, if we keep his ways?" Here is a devil in grain! What! bid a man walk "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience?"

*Objection.* But we do not know that such are coming to Jesus Christ; truly we wonder at them, and think they are fools.

*Answer.* 1. Do you not know they are coming to Jesus Christ? then they may be coming to him, for aught you know; and why will you be worse than the brute, to speak evil of the things you know not? What, are you made to be taken and de-



stroyed? must ye utterly perish in your own corruptions?

2. Do you not know them? Let them alone then. If you cannot speak good of them, speak not bad; "Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel, or this work, be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

3. But why do you wonder at a work of conviction and conversion? Know you not that this is the judgment of God upon you, ye despisers, "to behold, and wonder, and perish?"

4. But why wonder, and think they are fools? Is the way of the just an abomination to you? See that passage, and be ashamed, "He that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked."

5. Your wondering at them argues that you are strangers to yourselves, to conviction for sin, and to hearty desires to be saved; as also coming to Jesus Christ.

*Objection.* But how shall we know that such men are coming to Jesus Christ?

*Answer.* Who can make them see that Christ has made blind? Nevertheless, because I endeavor thy conviction, conversion, and salvation, consider,

1. Do they cry out of sin, being burdened with it, as an exceeding bitter thing?

2. Do they fly from it, as from the face of a deadly serpent?

3. Do they cry out of the insufficiency of their own righteousness, as to justification in the sight of God?

4. Do they cry out after the Lord Jesus to save them?

5. Do they see more worth and merit in one drop of Christ's blood to save them, than in all the sins of the world to damn them?

6. Are they tender of sinning against Jesus Christ?

7. Is his name, person, and understandings, more precious to them, than is the glory of the world?

8. Is this world more dear unto them?

9. Is faith in Christ (of which they are convinced by God's Spirit of the want of, and that without it they can never close with Christ) precious to them?

10. Do they favor Christ in this world, and do they leave all the world for his sake? And are they willing (God helping them) to run hazards for his name, for the love they bear to him?

11. Are his saints precious to them?

If these things be so, whether thou seest them or no, these men are coming to Jesus Christ.

II. I come now to the second observation propounded to be spoken to, to wit, That they that are coming to Jesus Christ

are oftentimes heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them.

I told you that this observation is implied in the text; and I gather it, 1. From the largeness and openness of the promise; "I will in no wise cast out." For had there not been a proneness in us to fear casting out, Christ needed not to have, as it were, way-laid our fear, as he doth by this great and strange expression, "in no wise; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." There needed not, as I may say, such a promise to be invented by the wisdom of heaven, and worded at such a rate, as it were on purpose to dash in pieces at one blow, all the objections of coming sinners, if they were not prone to admit of such objections, to the discouraging of their own souls. For this word, *in no wise*, cutteth the throat of all objections; and it was dropped by the Lord Jesus for that very end; and to help the faith that is mixed with unbelief.

And it is, as it were, the sum of all promises; neither can any objection be made upon the unworthiness that thou findest in thee, that this promise will not assail.

But I am a great sinner, sayest thou.

*I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

But I am an old sinner, sayest thou.

*I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

But I am an hard-hearted sinner, sayest thou.

*I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

But I am a backsliding sinner, sayest thou.

*I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

But I have served Satan all my days, sayest thou.

*I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

But I have sinned against light, sayest thou.

*I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

But I have sinned against mercy, sayest thou.

*I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

But I have no good thing to bring with me, sayest thou.

*I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

Thus I might go on to the end of things, and show you, that still this promise was provided to answer all objections, and doth answer them. But I say, what need it be, if they that are coming to Jesus Christ are not sometimes, yea, oftentimes, heartily afraid, "that Jesus Christ will cast them out?"

2. I will give you now two instances that seem to imply the truth of this observation.

In the 9th of Matthew, at the second verse, you read of a man that was sick of the palsy; and he was coming to Jesus Christ, being borne upon a bed by his friends; he was also coming himself, and

that upon another account than any of his friends were aware of; even for the pardon of sins; and the salvation of his soul. Now, so soon as ever he was come into the presence of Christ, Christ bids him "be of good cheer." It seems then his heart was fainting; but what was the cause of his fainting? Not his bodily infirmity, for the cure of which his friends did bring him to Christ; but the guilt and burthen of his sins, for the pardon of which himself did come to him: therefore he proceeds, "Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee."

I say, Christ saw him sinking in his mind, about how it would go with his most noble part; and therefore, first, he applies himself to him upon that account. For though his friends had faith enough as to the cure of the body, yet he himself had little enough as to the cure of his soul: therefore Christ takes him up as a man falling down, saying, "Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee."

That about the prodigal seems pertinent also in this matter; "When he was come to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my Father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish for hunger! I will arise now, and go to my Father." Heartily spoken; but how did he perform his promise? I think not so well as he promised to do, and my ground for my thoughts is, because his Father, so soon as he was come to him, fell upon his neck, and kissed him; implying, methinks, as if the prodigal at this time was dejected in his mind; and therefore his Father gives the most sudden and familiar token of reconciliation.

And kisses were of old time often used to remove doubts and fears. Thus Laban and Esau kissed Jacob: Thus Joseph kissed his brethren; and thus also David kissed Absalom. Gen. xxxv. 55; chap. xxxiii. 1—7; and chap. xlviii. 9, 10; 2 Sam. xiv. 33.

It is true, as I said, at first setting out he spake heartily, as sometimes sinners also do in their beginning to come to Jesus Christ; but might not he, yea, in all probability he had, (between the first step he took, and the last, by which he accomplished that journey,) many a thought, both this way and that, as whether his father would receive him or no? As thus: I said, "I would go to my Father:" But how, if when I came to him he should ask me, Where I have all this while been? What shall I say then? Also if he ask me, What is become of the portion of goods that he gave me? What shall I say then? If he ask me, Who have been my companions? What shall I say then? If he also should ask me, What hath been my preferment in all the time of my absence from him? What shall I say then? Yea, and

if he ask me, Why I came home no sooner? What shall I say then? Thus, I say, might he reason with himself; and being conscious to himself, that he could give but a very bad answer to any of these interrogatories, no marvel if he stood in need first of all of a kiss from his Father's lips. For had he answered the first in truth, he must say, I have been a haunter of taverns and ale-houses; and as for my portion, I spent it in riotous living; my companions were whores and drabs; as for my preferment, the highest was, that I became a hogherd; and as for my not coming home till now, could I have made shift to stay abroad any longer, I had not been at thy feet for mercy now.

I say these things considered, and considering again, how prone poor men are to give way, when truly awakened, to despondings, and heart-misgivings, no marvel if he did sink in his mind, between the time of his first setting out, and that of his coming to his Father.

3. But, thirdly, methinks I have, for the confirmation of this truth, the consent of all the saints, that are under heaven, to wit, That they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are oftentimes heartily afraid that he will not receive them.

*Question.* But what should be the reason? I will answer to this question thus,

1. It is not for the want of the revealed will of God, that manifesteth grounds for the contrary, for of that there is a sufficiency; yea, the text itself hath laid a sufficient foundation for encouragement, for them that are coming to Jesus Christ.

"And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

2. It is not for want of any invitation to come, for that is full and plain: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

3. Neither is it for want of manifestation of Christ's willingness to receive, as those texts above named, with that which follows declareth, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

4. It is not for want of exceeding great and precious promises to receive them that come. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

5. It is not for want of solemn oath and engagement to save them that come: "For because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible that God should lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us."



6. Neither is it for want of great examples of God's mercy, that have come to Jesus Christ, of which we read most plentifully in the word.

Therefore, it must be concluded, it is for want of that which follows.

1. It is for want of the knowledge of Christ. Thou knowest but little of the grace and kindness that is in the heart of Christ; thou knowest but little of the virtue and merit of his blood! thou knowest but little of the willingness that is in his heart to save thee; and this is the reason of the fear that ariseth in thy heart, and that causeth thee to doubt, that Christ will not receive thee. Unbelief is the daughter of ignorance. Therefore Christ saith, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe."

Slowness of heart to believe, flows from thy foolishness in the things of Christ: this is evident to all that are acquainted with themselves, and are seeking after Jesus Christ. The more ignorance, the more unbelief: the more knowledge of Christ, the more faith. "They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee." He therefore that began to come to Christ but the other day, and hath yet but little knowledge of him, he fears that Christ will not receive him. But he that hath been longer acquainted with him, he is "strong, and hath overcome the wicked one."

When Joseph's brethren came into Egypt to buy corn, it is said, "Joseph knew his brethren, but his brethren knew not him." What follows? Why, great mistrust of heart about their speeding well; especially if Joseph did but answer them roughly, calling them spies, and questioning their truth and the like. And observe it, so long as their ignorance about their brother remained with them, whatsoever Joseph did, still they put the worst sense upon it: For instance, Joseph upon a time bids the steward of his house bring them home to dine with him, to dine even in Joseph's house: And how is this resented by them? Why, they are afraid: "And the men were afraid, because they were brought unto" (their brother) "Joseph's house." And they said, "He seeketh occasion against us, and will fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses." What! afraid to go to Joseph's house! He was their brother: he intended to feast them: to feast them, and to feast with them. Ah! but they were ignorant that he was their brother: And so long as their ignorance lasted, so long their fear terrified them. Just thus it is with the sinner that but of late is coming to Jesus Christ: He is ignorant of the love and pity that is in Christ to coming sinners: Therefore he doubts, therefore he fears, therefore his heart misgives him.

Coming sinner, Christ inviteth thee to dine and sup with him: he inviteth thee to

a banquet of wine, yea to come into his wine-cellar, and his banner over thee shall be love. Rev. xxx. 20; Song ii. 5. But I doubt it, says the sinner; but it is answered, he calls thee, invites thee to his banquet, flaggons, apples, to his wine, and to the juice of his pomegranate. O I fear, I doubt, I mistrust, I tremble in expectation of the contrary! Come out of the man, thou dastardly ignorance. Be not afraid, sinner, only believe. "He that cometh to Christ, he will in no wise cast out."

Let the coming sinner therefore seek after more of the good knowledge of Jesus Christ: Press after it, seek it as silver, and dig for it as for hid treasure. This will embolden thee: this will make thee wax stronger and stronger. I know whom I have believed, "I know him," saith Paul; and what follows? Why, "I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

What had Paul committed to Jesus Christ? The answer is, He had "committed to him his soul." But why did he commit his soul to him? He knew him to be faithful, to be kind: He knew he would not fail him, nor forsake him: and therefore he laid his soul down at his feet, and committed it to him, to keep against that day. But,

2. Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee, may be also a consequent of thy earnest and strong desires after thy salvation by him. For this I observe, that strong desires to have, are attended with strong fears of missing. What man most sets his heart upon, and what his desires are most after, he (ofttimes) most fears he shall not obtain. So the man, ruler of the synagogue, had a great desire that his daughter should live; and that desire was attended with fear, that she should not: Therefore Christ saith unto him, "Be not afraid."

Suppose a young man should have his heart much set upon a virgin to have her to wife, if ever he fears he shall not obtain her, it is when he begins to love; now, thinks he, somebody will step in betwixt my love and the object of it: either they will find fault with my person, my estate, my condition, or something.

Now thoughts begin to work; she doth not like me, or something. And thus it is with the soul at first coming to Jesus Christ, thou lovest him, and thy love produces jealousy, and that jealousy oftentimes begets fears.

Now thou fearest the sins of thy youth, the sins of thine old age, the sins of thy calling, the sins of thy Christian duties, the sins of thine heart, or something; thou thinkest something or other will alienate the heart and affections of Jesus Christ from thee; thou thinkest he sees something in thee, for the sake of which he will refuse thy soul.

But be content; a little more knowledge of him will make thee take better heart; thy earnest desires shall not be attended with such burning fears; thou shalt hereafter say, "This is my infirmity."

Thou art sick of love, a very sweet disease; and yet every disease has some weakness attending of it; yet I wish this distemper (if it be lawful to call it so) was more epidemical. Die of this disease, I would gladly do; it is better than life itself, though it be attended with fears. But thou criest out, I cannot obtain: well, be not to chasty to make conclusions. If Jesus Christ had not put his finger in at the hole of the lock, thy bowels would not have been troubled for him. Song 5. Mark how the prophet hath it: "They shall walk after the Lord: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, the children shall tremble from the west, they shall tremble like a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria."

When God roars, (as oftentimes the coming soul hears him roar) what man that is coming, can do otherwise than tremble? But trembling he comes; "He sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas."

Should you ask him that we mentioned but now, How long is it since you began to fear you should miss of this damsel you love so? The answer will be, ever since I began to love her. But did you not fear it before? No, nor should I fear now, but that I vehemently love her. Come, sinner, let us apply it: How long is it since thou began to fear that Jesus Christ will not receive thee? The answer is, ever since I began to desire that he would save my soul. I began to fear, when I began to come, and the more my heart burns in desires after him, the more I feel my heart fear I should not be saved by him.

See now, did I not tell thee that thy fears were but the consequence of strong desires? Well, fear not, coming sinner, thousands of coming souls are in thy condition, and yet they will get safe into Christ's bosom. "Say," says Christ, "to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not! Your God will come and save you."

3. Thy fear that Christ will not receive thee, may arise from a sense of thy own unworthiness. Thou seest what a poor, sorry, wretched, worthless creature thou art. And seeing this, thou fearest Christ will not receive thee. Alas, sayest thou, I am the vilest of all men; a town sinner, a ring-leading sinner! I am not only a sinner myself, but have made others two-fold worse the children of hell also. Besides, now I am under some awakenings and stirrings of mind after salvation; even now I find my heart rebellious, carnal, hard,

treacherous, desperate, prone to unbelief, to despair: it forgetteth the word; it wandereth; it runneth to the ends of the earth. There is not, I am persuaded, one in all the world, that hath such a desperate wicked heart as mine is. My soul is careless to do good, but none more earnest to do that which is evil.

Can such a one as I am live in glory? Can a holy, a just, and a righteous God, once think (with honor to his name) of saving such a vile creature as I am? I fear it. Will he show wonders to such a dead dog as I am? I doubt it.

I am cast out to the loathing of my person, yea, I loathe myself: I stink in mine own nostrils. How can I then be accepted by a holy and sin-aborring God? Psal. xxxviii. 5, 6, 7; Ezek. x. and xx. 42, 43, 44. Saved I would be; and who is there that would not, were they in my condition? Indeed, I wonder at the madness and folly of others, when I see them leap and skip so carelessly about the mouth of hell. Bold sinner, how darest thou tempt God, by laughing at the breach of his holy law? But alas! they fare not so bad one way, but I am worse another: I wish myself were any body but myself; and yet here again, I know not what to wish. When I see such as I believe are coming to Jesus Christ, O I bless them! But am confounded in myself, to see how unlike, as I think, I am to a very good many in the world. They can read, hear, pray, remember. repent, be humble, do every thing better than so vile a wretch as I.

I, vile wretch, am good for nothing, but to burn in hell-fire, and when I think of that, I am confounded too.

Thus the sense of unworthiness creates and heightens fears in the hearts of them that are coming to Jesus Christ; but indeed it should not: for who needs the physician but the sick? or, who did Christ come into the world to save but the chief of sinners? Mark i. 17; 1. Tim. i. 15. Wherefore, the more thou seest thy sins, the faster fly thou to Jesus Christ. And let the sense of thine own unworthiness prevail with thee yet to go faster. As it is with the man that carrieth his broken arm in a sling to the bone-setter, still as he thinks of his broken arm, and as he feels the pain and anguish, he hastens his pace to the man; and if Satan meets thee, and asketh, whither goest thou? tell him thou art maimed, and art going to the Lord Jesus. If he objects thine own unworthiness, tell him, that even as the sick seeketh the physician, as he that hath broken bones seeks him that can set them, so thou art going to Jesus Christ for cure and healing, for thy sin-sick soul.

But it oftentimes happeneth to him that flies for his life, he despairs of escaping,



and therefore delivers himself up into the hand of the pursuer. But up, up, sinner; be of good cheer; Christ came to save the unworthy one; be not faithless, but believe. Come away, man, the Lord Jesus calls thee, saying, "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

4. Thy fear that Christ will not receive thee, may arise from a sense of the exceeding mercy of being saved. Sometimes salvation is in the eyes of him that desires so great, so huge, so wonderful a thing, that the very thoughts of the excellency of it, engenders unbelief about obtaining it, in the heart of those that unfeignedly desire it. "Seemeth it to you (saith David) a light thing to be a king's son-in-law?" 1 Sam. xviii. 26. So the thought of the greatness and glory of the thing propounded, as heaven, eternal life, eternal glory, to be with God, and Christ, and angels; these are great things, things too good, (saith the soul that is little in his own eyes;) things too rich (saith the soul that is truly poor in spirit) for me.

Besides, the Holy Ghost hath a way to greaten heavenly things to the understanding of the coming sinner; yea, and at the very same time to greaten too the sin and unworthiness of that sinner. Now the soul staggeringly wonders, saying, What! to be made like angels, like Christ, to live in eternal bliss, joy, and felicity! This is for angels, and for them that can walk like angels!

If a prince, a duke, an earl, should send (by the hand of his servant) for some poor, sorry beggarly scrub, to take her for his master to wife, and the servant should come and say, My lord and master, such a one hath sent me to thee, to take thee to him to wife: he is rich, beautiful, and of excellent qualities; he is loving, meek, humble, well-spoken, &c. What now would this poor, sorry, beggarly creature think? What would she say? or, how would she frame an answer? When King David sent to Abigail upon this account, and though she was a rich woman, yet she said, "Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." She was confounded, she could not well tell what to say, the offer was so great, beyond what in reason could be expected.

But suppose this great person should second his suit, and send to this sorry creature again, what would she say now? Would she not say, You mock me? But what if he affirms, that he is in good earnest, and that his lord must have her to wife; yea, suppose he should prevail upon her to credit his message, and to address herself for her journey; yet, behold, every thought of her pedigree confounds her; also her

sense of want of beauty makes her ashamed; and if she doth but think of being embraced, the unbelief that is mixed with that thought, whirles her into tremblings: and now she calls herself fool, for believing the messenger, and thinks not to go; if she thinks of being bold, she blushes; and the least thought that she shall be rejected, when she comes at him, makes her look as if she would give up the ghost.

And is it a wonder then to see a soul that is drowned in the sense of glory, and a sense of its own nothingness, to be confounded in itself, and to fear, that the glory apprehended is too great, too good, and too rich, for such an one?

That thing, heaven and eternal glory, is so great, and I that would have it, so small, so sorry a creature, that the thoughts of obtaining it confounds me.

Thus, I say, doth the greatness of the things desired, quite dash and overthrow the mind of the desire: O, it is too big! it is too big! it is too great a mercy!

But, coming sinner, let me reason with thee. Thou sayest, it is too big, too great. Well, will things that are less, satisfy thy soul? Will a less thing than heaven, than glory and eternal life, answer thy desires? No, nothing less: and yet I fear they are too big, and too good for me, even to obtain. Well, as big and as good as they are, God giveth them to such as thou; they are not too big for God to give; no, not too big to give freely; be content, let God give like himself; he is that eternal God, and giveth like himself. When kings give, they do not use to give as poor men do. Hence it is said, that Nabal made a feast in his house like the feast of a king; and again, "All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto David." Now, God is a great king, let him give like a king, nay, let him give like himself, and do thou receive like thyself: He hath all, and thou hast nothing. God told his people of old, that he would save them in truth and in righteousness, and that they should return to, and enjoy the land, which before, for their sins, had spewed them out; and then adds, under the supposition of their counting the mercy too good, or too big, "If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts."

As who should say, They are now in captivity, and little in their own eyes; therefore they think, the mercy of returning to Canaan is a mercy too marvellously big for them to enjoy; but if it be so in their eyes, it is not so in mine: I will do for them like God, if they will but receive my bounty like sinners.

Coming sinner, God can give his heav-

enly Canaan, and the glory of it, unto thee; yea, none ever had them but as a gift, a free gift: He hath given us his Son, "How shall he not, then, with him also freely give us all things?"

It was not the worthiness of Abraham, or Moses, or David, or Peter, or Paul, but the mercy of God, that made them inheritors of heaven. If God thinks thee worthy judge not thyself unworthy; but take it, and be thankful. And it is a good sign he intends to give thee, if he hath drawn out thy heart to ask. "O Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their hearts; thou wilt incline thine ear."

When God is said to incline his ear, it implies an intention to bestow the mercy desired; Take it therefore; thy wisdom will be to receive, not sticking at thy own unworthiness. It is said, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." Again, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set them with the princes, even with the princes of his people."

You see also when God made a wedding for his Son; he called not the great, nor rich, nor the mighty; but the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind.

5. Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee, may arise from the hideous roaring of the devil, who pursues thee. He that hears him roar, must be a mighty Christian, if he can at that time deliver himself from fear. He is called a roaring lion; and then to allude to that in Isaiah, "If one look into them, they have darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkness in their very heaven."

There are two things, among many, that Satan useth to roar out after them that are coming to Jesus Christ: 1. That they are not elected. 2. That they have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost.

To both these I answer briefly,

First, Touching Election, out of which thou fearest thou art excluded: Why, coming sinner, even the text itself affordeth thee help against this doubt, and that by a double argument.

1st. That, coming to Christ is, by virtue of the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father; but thou art a coming; therefore God hath given thee, promised thee, and is drawing thee to Jesus Christ. Coming sinner, hold to this; and when Satan becometh to roar again, answer. But I feel my heart moving after Jesus Christ; but that would not be, if it were not given by promise, and drawing to Christ by the power of the Father.

2dly. Jesus Christ hath promised, "that

him that cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out:" And if he hath said it, will he not make it good, I mean even thy salvation? For, as I have said already, not to cast out, is to receive and admit to the benefit of salvation. If then the Father hath given thee, as is manifest by thy coming; and if Christ will receive thee, thou coming soul, as it is plain he will, because he hath said, "He will in no wise cast out;" then be confident, and let these conclusions, that as naturally flow from the text, as light from the sun, or water from the fountain, stay thee.

If Satan therefore objecteth, But thou art not elected; answer, But I am coming, Satan, I am coming; and that I could not be, but that the Father draws me; and I am coming to such a Lord Jesus, as will in no wise cast me out. Further, Satan, were I not elect, the Father would not draw me, nor would the Son so graciously open his bosom to me. I am persuaded, that not one of the non-elect shall ever be able to say, no, not in the day of judgment, I did sincerely come to Jesus Christ. Come they may, feignedly, as Judas and Simon Magus did; but that is not our question. Therefore, O thou honest-hearted, coming sinner, be not afraid, but come!

As to the second part of the objection, about sinning the sin against the Holy Ghost; the same argument overthrows that also. But I will argue thus:

1st. Coming to Christ is by virtue of a special gift of the Father; but the Father giveth no such gift to them that have sinned that sin; therefore thou that art coming hast not committed that sin, That the Father giveth no such gift to them that have sinned that sin, is evident.

1. Because they have sinned themselves out of God's favor; "they shall never have forgiveness." But it is a special favor of God to give unto a man, to come unto Jesus Christ; because thereby he obtained forgiveness. Therefore he that cometh, hath not sinned that sin.

2. They that have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, have sinned themselves out of an interest in the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood; "There remains for such no more sacrifice for sin:" But God giveth not grace to any of them to come to Christ, that have no share in the sacrifice of his body and blood. Therefore thou that art coming to him, hast not sinned that sin. Heb. x. 26.

2dly, Coming to Christ is by the special drawing of the Father; "No man cometh to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him." But the Father draweth not him to Christ, for whom he hath not allotted forgiveness by his blood; therefore, they that are coming to Jesus Christ,



have not committed that sin, because he hath allotted them forgiveness by his blood. John vi. 44.

That the Father cannot draw them to Jesus Christ for whom he hath not allotted forgiveness of sins, is manifest to sense; for that would be a plain mockery, a flame, neither becoming his wisdom, justice, holiness, nor goodness.

3dly. Coming to Jesus Christ lays a man under the promise of forgiveness and salvation: But it is impossible that he that hath sinned that sin, should ever be put under a promise of these. Therefore he that hath sinned that sin, can never have heart to come to Jesus Christ.

4thly. Coming to Jesus Christ lays a man under his intercession: "For he ever liveth to make intercession for them that come." Therefore he that is coming to Jesus Christ cannot have sinned that sin.

Christ has forbid his people to pray for them that have sinned that sin; therefore he will not pray for them himself; but he prays for them that come.

5thly. He that hath sinned that sin, Christ is to him of no more worth, than is a man that is dead; "For he hath crucified to himself the Son of God; yea, and hath also counted his precious blood, as the blood of an unholy thing. Now he that hath this low esteem of Christ, will never come to him for life; but the coming man has an high esteem of his person, blood, and merits. Therefore he that is coming has not committed that sin.

6thly. If he that has sinned this sin might yet come to Jesus Christ, then must the truth of God be overthrown; which saith in one place, "He hath never forgiveness;" and in another, "I will in no wise cast him out." Therefore, that he may never have forgiveness, he shall never have heart to come to Jesus Christ. "It is impossible that such an one should be renewed either to, or by repentance." Wherefore, never trouble thy head nor heart about this matter; he that cometh to Jesus Christ, cannot have sinned against the Holy Ghost.

6. Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee, may arise from thine own folly, in inventing; yea, in thy chalking out to God a way to bring thee home to Jesus Christ. Some souls that are coming to Jesus Christ are great tormentors of themselves upon this account; they conclude that if there coming to Jesus Christ is right, they must needs be brought home thus and thus: As to instance.

1. Says one, If God be bringing of me to Jesus Christ, then will he load me with the guilt of sin till he makes me roar again.

2. If God be indeed bringing me home to Jesus Christ, then must I be assaulted with dreadful temptations of the devil.

3. If God be indeed bringing me to Jesus Christ, then even when I come at him, I shall have wonderful revelations of him.

This is the way that some sinners appoint for God; but perhaps he will not walk therein; yet will he bring them to Jesus Christ. But now, because they come not the way of their own chalking out, therefore they are at a loss. They look for a heavy load and burden; but perhaps God gives them a sight of their lost condition, and addeth not that heavy weight and burden. They look for fearful temptations of Satan; but God sees that yet they are not fit for them; nor is the time come that he should be honored by them in such a condition. They look for great and glorious revelations of Christ, grace, and mercy, but perhaps God only takes the yoke from off their jaws, and lays meat before them. And now again they are at a loss, yet a coming to Christ: "I drew them," saith God, "with the cords of a man, with the bands of love; I took the yoke from off their jaws, and laid meat unto them."

Now, I say, if God brings thee to Christ, and not by the way that thou hast appointed, then thou art at a loss; and for thy being at a loss, thou mayest thank thyself. God hath more ways than thou knowest of, to bring a sinner to Jesus Christ; but he will not give thee beforehand an account by which of them he will bring thee to Christ.

Sometimes he hath his ways in the whirlwind; but sometimes the Lord is not there:

If God will deal more gently with thee than with others of his children, grudge not at it; refuse not the waters that go softly, lest he bring up to thee the waters of the rivers, strong and many, even these two smoking firebrands, the devil and guilt of sin. He saith to Peter, "follow me," And what thunder did Zaccheus hear or see? "Zaccheus, come down," saith Christ, "and he came down," (says Luke,) "and received him joyfully."

But had Peter or Zaccheus made the objection that thou hast made, and directed the Spirit of the Lord as thou hast done, they might have looked long enough, before they had found themselves coming to Jesus Christ.

Besides, I will tell thee that the greatness of the sense of sin, the hideous roaring of the devil, yea, abundance of revelations, will not prove that God is bringing thy soul to Jesus Christ; as Balaam, Cain, Judas, and others, can witness.

Further, consider, that what thou hast not of these things here, thou mayest have another time, and that to thy distraction. Wherefore, instead of being discontent, because thou art not in the fire, because thou hearest not the sound of the trumpet, and

alarm of war, "Pray that thou enter not into temptation;" yea, come boldly to the throne of grace, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in that time of need. Ps. lxxxviii. 15. Matt. xi. 41. Heb. iv. 16.

Poor creature! thou criest, If I were tempted, I could come faster, and with more confidence to Jesus Christ. Thou sayest thou knowest not what. What says Job? "Withdraw thy hand from me, and let not thy dread make me afraid. Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me." It is not the over heavy load of sin, but the discovery of mercy; not the roaring of the devil, but the drawing of the Father, that makes a man come to Jesus Christ; I myself know all these things.

True, sometimes, yea, most an end, they that come to Jesus Christ, come the way that thou desirest; the leading, tempted way: but the Lord also leads some by the waters of comfort. If I was to choose when to go a long journey, to wit, whether I would go it in the dead of winter, or in the pleasant spring, (though if it was a very profitable journey, as that of coming to Christ is, I would choose to go it through fire and water, before I would lose the benefit:) But I say, if I might choose the time, I would choose to go it in the pleasant spring, because the way would be more delightful, the days longer and warmer, the nights shorter, and not so cold. And it is observable, that very argument that thou usest to weaken thy strength in the way, that very argument Christ Jesus useth to encourage his beloved to come to him: "Arise," saith he, "my love, my fair one, and come away: Why? For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear in the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vine, with her tender grapes, give a good smell: Arise my love, my fair one, and come away."

Trouble not thyself, coming sinner; if thou seest thy lost condition by original and actual sin; if thou seest thy need of the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ; if thou art willing to be found in him, and to take up thy cross and follow him; then pray for a fair wind and good weather, and come away. Stick no longer in a muse and doubt about things, but come away to Jesus Christ: Do it, I say; lest thou tempt God to lay the sorrows of a travailing woman upon thee. Thy folly in this thing may make him do it. Mind what follows, "The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: Why? He is an unwise son; so he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children."

7. Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee, may arise from those decays that thou findest in thy soul, even while thou art coming to him; So even as they are coming to Jesus Christ, do find themselves grow worse and worse; and this is indeed a sore trial to the poor coming sinner.

To explain myself: There is such an one coming to Jesus Christ, who, when at first he began to look out after him, was sensible, affectionate, and broken in spirit; but now is grown dark, senseless, hard-hearted and inclined to neglect spiritual duties, &c. Besides, he now finds in himself inclinations to unbelief, atheism, blasphemy, and the like; now he finds he cannot tremble at God's word, his judgments, nor at the apprehension of hell-fire: neither can he, as he thinketh, be sorry for these things. Now this is a sad dispensation; The man under the sixth head complaineth for want of temptations, but thou hast enough of them; art thou glad of them, tempted, coming sinner? They that never were exercised with them, may think it a fine thing to be within the rage, but he that is there, is ready to sweat blood for sorrow of heart, and to howl for vexation of spirit.

This man is in the wilderness among wild beasts: Here he sees a bear, there a lion, yonder a leopard, a wolf, a dragon; devils of all sorts, doubts of all sorts, fears of all sorts, haunt and molest his soul. Here he sees smoke, yea, some fire and brimstone, scattered upon his secret places; He hears the sound of an horrible tempest.

O! my friends, even the Lord Jesus, that knew all things, even he saw no pleasure in temptations, nor did he desire to be with them; wherefore one text saith, "he was led," and another, "he was driven," of the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.

But to return: Thus it happeneth sometimes to them that are coming to Jesus Christ. A sad hap indeed! one would think that he that is flying from wrath to come has little need of such clogs as these: And yet so it is, a woful experience proves it. The church of old complained that her enemies overtook her between the straits; just between hope and fear, heaven and hell.

This man feelth the infirmity of his flesh; he findeth a proneness in himself to be desperate: Now he chides with God, flings and tumbles like a wild bull in a net, and still the guilt of all returns upon himself, to the crushing of him to pieces: Yet he feelth his heart so hard, that he can find, as he thinks, no kind falling under any of his miscarriages. Now he is a lump of confusion in his own eyes, whose spirit and actions are without order.

Temptations serve the Christians as the



shepherd's dog serveth the silly sheep; that is coming behind the flock, he runs upon it, pulls it down, worries it, wounds it, and grievously bedabbleth it with dirt and wet, in the lowest places of the furrows of the field, and not leaving it until it is half dead, nor then neither, except God rebuke.

Here is now room for fears of being cast away. Now I see I am lost, says the sinner; This is not coming to Jesus Christ, says the sinner: such a desperate, hard, and wretched heart as mine is, cannot be a gracious one, saith the sinner: And bid such an one be better, he says, I cannot, no, I cannot.

*Question.* But what will you say to a soul in this condition?

*Answer.* I will say that temptations have attended the best of God's people; I will say that temptations come to do us good; and I will say also, That there is a difference betwixt growing worse and worse, and thy seeing more clearly how bad thou art.

There is a man of an ill-favored countenance, who hath too high a conceit of his beauty, and wanting the benefit of a glass, he still stands in his own conceit; at last a limner is sent unto him, who draweth his ill-favored face to the life; now looking thereon, he begins to be convinced that he is not half so handsome as he thought he was. Coming sinner, thy temptations are these painters, they have drawn out thy ill-favored heart to the life, and have set it before thine eyes, and now thou seest how ill-favored thou art.

Hezekiah was a good man, yet when he lay sick (for aught I know) he had somewhat too good an opinion of his heart; and for aught I know also, the Lord might upon his recovery leave him to a temptation, that he might better know all that was in his heart.

Alas! we are sinful out of measure, but see it not to the full, until an hour of temptation comes; But when it comes, it doth as the painter doth, draw out our heart to the life; yet the sight of what we are should not keep us from coming to Jesus Christ.

There are two ways by which God lets a man into a sight of the naughtiness of his heart; one is by the light of the word and Spirit of God, the others is, by the temptations of the devil. But, by the first, we see our naughtiness one way, and by the second, another. By the light of the word and Spirit of God, thou hast a sight of thy naughtiness, and by the light of the sun, thou hast a sight of the spots and defilements that are in thy house or raiment. Which light gives thee to see a necessity of cleansing, but maketh not the blemishes to spread more abominably. But when

Satan comes, when he tempts, he puts life and rage into our sins, and turns them as it were, into so many devils within us. Now, like prisoners, they attempt to break through the prison of our body: they will attempt to get out at our eyes, mouth, ears, any ways to the scandal of the gospel, and reproach of religion, to the darkening of our evidences, and damning of our souls.

But I shall say, as I said before, this hath oftentimes been the lot of God's people. And, "No temptation hath overtaken thee, but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not suffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able." See the book of Job, the book of Psalms, and that of the Lamentations. And remember farther, that Christ himself was tempted to blaspheme, to worship the devil, and to murder himself, (temptations worse than which thou canst hardly be overtaken with.) But he was sinless, that is true. And he is thy Saviour, and that is as true. Yea, it is as true also, that by his being tempted he became the conqueror of the tempter, and a succorer of those that are tempted.

*Question.* But what should be the reason that some that are coming to Christ, should be so lamentably cast down, and buffeted with temptation?

*Answer.* It may be for several causes.

1. Some that are coming to Christ, cannot be persuaded until the temptation comes that they are so vile as the scripture saith they are. True they see so much of their wretchedness as to drive them to Christ: But there is an over and above of wickedness which they see not. Peter little thought that he had had cursing, and swearing, and lying, and an inclination in his heart to deny his Master, before the temptation came: but when that indeed came upon him, then he found it there to his sorrow.

2. Some that are coming to Jesus Christ are too much affected with their own graces, and too little taken with Christ's person; wherefore God, to take them off from doting on their own jewels, and that they might look more to the person, undertaking and merits of his Son, plunges them into the ditch by temptations. And this I take to be the meaning of Job: "If I wash me," saith he, "with snow-water, and make myself never so clean, yet wilt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." Job had been a little too much tampering with his own graces, and setting his excellencies a little too high. But by that the temptations were ended, you find him better taught.

Yea, God doth oftentimes, even for this thing, as it were take our graces from us, and so leave us almost quite to ourselves, and to the tempter, that we may learn not

to love the picture more than the person of his Son. See how he dealt with them in the 16th of Ezekiel, and the 2d of Hosea.

3. Perhaps thou hast been given too much to judge thy brother, to condemn thy brother, because a poor tempted man; and God to bring down the pride of thy heart, letteth the tempter loose upon thee, that thou also mayest feel thyself weak. "For pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

4. It may be thou hast dealt a little too roughly with those that God hath this way wounded, not considering thyself lest thou also be tempted: And therefore God hath suffered it to come unto thee.

5. It may be thou wast given to slumber and sleep, and therefore these temptations were sent to awake thee. You know that Peter's temptation came upon him, after his sleeping; then instead of watching and praying, then he denied, and denied, and denied his Master.

6. It may be thou hast presumed too far, and stood too much in thine own strength, and therefore is a time of temptation come upon thee. This was also one cause why it came upon Peter: "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I." Ah! that is the way to be tempted indeed.

7. It may be God intends to make thee wise, to speak a word in season to others that are afflicted; and therefore he suffereth thee to be tempted. Christ was tempted that he might be able to succor them that are tempted.

8. It may be Satan hath dared God to suffer him to tempt thee: promising himself that if he will but let him do it, thou wilt curse him to his face. Thus he obtained leave against Job; wherefore take heed, tempted soul, lest thou provest the devil's saying true.

9. It may be thy graces must be tried in the fire, that that rust that cleaveth to them may be taken away, and themselves proved, both before angels and devils, to be far better than of gold that perisheth; it may be also that thy graces are to receive special praises, and honor, and glory, at the coming of the Lord Jesus (to judgment,) for all the exploits that thou hast acted by them against hell, and its infernal crew, in the day of thy temptation.

10. It may be God would have others learn by thy sighs, groans, and complaints under temptations, to beware of those sins, for the sake of which thou art at present delivered to the tormentors.

But to conclude this, put the worst to the worst, (and then things will be bad enough,) suppose that thou art to this day without the grace of God, yet thou art but a miserable creature, a sinner, that has need of a blessed Saviour; and the text

presents thee with one as good and kind as heart can wish; who also for thy encouragement saith, "and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

To come therefore to a word of application.

Is it so, that they are coming to Jesus Christ, are oftentimes heartily afraid, that Jesus Christ will not receive them? Then this teacheth us these things:

1. That faith and doubting may at the same time have their residence in the same soul. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" He saith not, O thou of no faith; but O thou of little faith; because he had a little faith in the midst of his many doubts. The same is true, even of many that are coming to Jesus Christ: They come, and fear they come not, and doubt they come not. When they look upon the promise, or a word of encouragement by faith, then they come; when they look upon themselves, or the difficulties that lie before them, then they doubt. Bid me come, said Peter; Come, said Christ. So he went out of the ship to go to Jesus, but his hap was to go to him upon the water; there was the trial. So it was with the poor desiring soul. Bid me come, says the sinner; come, says Christ, and I will in no wise cast thee out; So he comes, but his hap is to come upon the water, upon drowning difficulties; if therefore the wind of temptations blow, the waves of doubts and fears will presently arise, and this coming sinner will begin to sink, if he has but little faith.

But you shall find here in Peter's little faith, a twofold act; to wit, coming and crying: Little faith cannot come all the way without crying. So long as its holy boldness lasts, so long it can come with peace, but when it is so it can come no farther, it will go the rest of the way with crying. Peter went as far as his little faith would carry him: He also cried as far as his little faith could help, "Lord, save me, I perish." And so with coming and crying he was kept from sinking, though he had but a little faith. "Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

2. Is it so, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are oftentimes heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them? Then this shows us a reason of that dejection, and those castings down, that very often we perceive to be in them that are coming to Jesus Christ. Why, it is, because they are afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them. The poor world they mock us, because we are a dejected people; I mean, because we are sometimes so; but they do not know the cause of our dejection. Could we be persuaded, even then



when we are dejected, that Jesus Christ would indeed receive us, it would make us fly over their heads, and would put more gladness into our hearts, than in the time in which their corn, wine, and oil increases. Ps. iv.

3. Is it so, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are oftentimes heartily afraid that he will not receive them? Then this shows, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are an awakened, sensible, considering people; For fear cometh from sense, and consideration of things. They are sensible of sin, sensible of the curse due thereto; they are also sensible of the glorious majesty of God, and of what a blessed, blessed thing it is to be received of Jesus Christ: The glory of heaven, and the evil of sin, these things they consider, and are sensible of. "When I remember I am afraid: When I consider I am afraid."

These things dash their spirits, being awake and sensible. Were they dead, like other men, they would not be afflicted with fear as they are; for dead men fear not, feel not, care not; but the living and sensible man, he it is that is oftentimes heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive him. I say, the dead and senseless are not distressed: They presume they are groundlessly confident. Who so bold as blind Bayard? These indeed should fear and be afraid because they are not coming to Jesus Christ. O the hell, the fire, the pit, the wrath of God, and torment of hell, that are prepared for poor neglecting sinners! "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." But they want sense of things, and cannot fear.

It is so that they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are oftentimes heartily afraid that he will not receive them? Then this should teach old Christians, to pity and pray for young comers: You know the heart of a stranger, for you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt. You know the fears, and doubts, and terrors, that take hold on them, for they sometimes took hold on you. Wherefore pity them, pray for them, encourage them; they need all this: guilt hath overtaken them, fear of the wrath of God hath overtaken them; Perhaps they are within the sight of hell-fire; and the fear of going thither is burning hot within their hearts.

You may know how strangely Satan is suggesting his devilish doubts unto them, if possible he may sink and drown them with his multitude and weight of them. Old Christians, mend up the path for them, take the stumbling-blocks out of the way, lest that which is feeble and weak be turned aside, but let it rather be healed.

III. I come now to the next observation, and shall speak a little to that; to wit, That

Jesus Christ would not have them that in truth are coming to him, once think that he will cast them out.

The text is full of this; "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Now if he saith, I will not, he would not have us think he will.

This is yet farther manifest by these considerations.

1. Christ Jesus did forbid even them that as yet were not coming to him, once to think him such an one. "Do not think," said he, "that I will accuse you to the Father."

These, as I said, were such, that as yet were not coming to him: For he saith of them a little before, and ye will not come to me: for the respect they had to the honor of men kept them back. Yet, I say, Jesus Christ gives them to understand, that though he might justly reject them, yet he would not, but bids them not once to think that he would accuse them to the Father. Now, not to accuse (with Christ) is to plead for: for Christ in these things stands not neuter between the Father and sinners. So then, if Jesus Christ would not have them think, that yet will not come to him, that he will accuse them; then he would not that they should think so, that in truth are coming to him: "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

2. When the woman taken in adultery (even in the very act) was brought before Jesus Christ, he so carried it both by words and actions, that he evidently enough made it manifest, that condemning and casting out were such things, for the doing of which he came not into the world.

Wherefore, when they had set her before him, and had laid to her charge the heinous fact, he stooped down, and with his finger wrote upon the ground as though he heard them not. Now what did he do by this carriage, but testify plainly that he was not for receiving accusations against poor sinners, whoever accused by? And observe, though they continued asking, thinking at last to force him to condemn her; yet then he so answered, as that he drove all condemning persons from her. And then he adds, for her encouragement to come to him: "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more."

Not but that he indeed abhorred the fact, but he would not condemn the woman for the sin, because that was not his office. "He was not sent into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Now if Christ, though urged to it, would not condemn the guilty woman, though she was far at present from coming to him, he would not that they should once think, that he will cast them out, that in truth are coming to him: "And

him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

3. Christ plainly bids the turning sinner come: and forbids him to entertain any such thoughts, as that he will cast him out. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

The Lord by bidding the unrighteous forsake his thoughts doth in special forbid, as I have said, viz. those thoughts that hinder the coming man in his progress to Jesus Christ, his unbelieving thoughts.

Therefore he bids them not only forsake his ways but his thoughts; "Let the sinner forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." It is not enough to forsake one, if thou wilt come to Jesus Christ, because the other will keep thee from him. Suppose a man forsake his wicked ways, his debauched and filthy life; yet if these thoughts, that Jesus Christ will not receive him, be entertained and nourished in his heart, these thoughts will keep him from coming to Jesus Christ.

Sinner, coming sinner, Art thou for coming to Jesus Christ? Yes, says the sinner. Forsake thy wicked ways then. So I do, says the sinner. Why comest thou then so slowly? Because I am hindered. What hinders? Has God forbidden thee? No. Art thou not willing to come faster? Yes, yet I cannot. Well, prithee be plain with me, and tell me the reason and ground of thy discouragement. Why, says the sinner, though God forbids me not, and though I am willing to come faster, yet there naturally ariseth this, and that, and the other thought in my heart, that hinders my speed to Jesus Christ. Sometimes I think I am not chosen; sometimes I think I am not called; sometimes I think I am come too late; and sometimes I think I know not what is to come. Also one while I think I have no grace; and then again, that I cannot pray; and then again, I think I am a very hypocrite. And these things keep me from coming to Jesus Christ.

Look ye now, did I not tell you so? There are thoughts yet remaining in the heart, even of those who have forsaken their wicked ways; and with those thoughts they are more plagued than with any thing else; because they hinder their coming to Jesus Christ, for the sin of unbelief (which is the original of all these thoughts) is that which besets a coming sinner more easily than do his ways.

But now, since Jesus Christ commands thee to forsake these thoughts, forsake them, coming sinner: and if thou forsake them not, thou transgressest the commands of Christ, and abidest thine own torment-

or, and keepest thyself from establishment in grace: "If ye will not believe, ye shall not be established."

Thus you see how Jesus Christ setteth himself against such thoughts, that any way discourage the coming sinner; and thereby truly vindicates the doctrine we have in hand, to wit, That Jesus Christ would not have them, that in truth are coming to him, once think, that he will cast them out. "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise out."

I come now to the reasons of the observation.

1. If Jesus Christ should allow thee once to think, that he will cast thee out, he must allow thee to think that he will falsify his word; for he hath said, "I will in no wise cast out." But Christ would not that thou shouldst count him as one that will falsify his word; for he saith of himself, "I am the truth;" therefore he would not, that any that in truth are coming to him, should once think, that he will cast them out.

2. If Jesus Christ should allow the sinner, that in truth is coming him, once to think that he will cast them out, then he must allow, and so countenance the first appearance of unbelief: the which he counteth his greatest enemy, and against which he has bent even his holy gospel. Therefore Jesus Christ would not, that they that in truth are coming to him, should once think that he will cast them out.

3. If Jesus Christ should allow the coming sinner once to think, that he will cast him out, then he must allow him to make a question, Whether he is willing to receive his Father's gift: for the coming sinner is his Father's gift: as also says the text; but he testifieth, "All that the Father giveth him shall come to him: and him that cometh, he will in no wise cast out." Therefore Jesus Christ would not have him, that in truth is coming to him, once to think, that he will cast him out.

4. If Jesus Christ should allow them once to think, (that indeed are coming to him,) that he will cast them out, he must allow them to think, that he will despise and reject the drawing of his Father; For no man can come to him, but whom the Father draweth. But it would be high blasphemy, and damnable wickedness once to imagine thus. Therefore, Jesus Christ would not have him that cometh, once think, that he will cast him out.

5. If Jesus Christ should allow those that indeed are coming to him, once to think that he will cast them out, he must allow them to think, that he will be unfaithful to the trust and charge that his Father hath committed to him; which is to save, and not to lose any thing of that which he hath given unto him to save. But the Father



er hath given him a charge, to save the coming sinner; therefore it cannot be, that he should allow, that such an one should once think, that he will cast him out.

6. If Jesus Christ should allow, that they should once think, that are coming to him, that he will cast them out, then he must allow them to think, that he will be unfaithful to his office of priesthood; for, as by the first part of it, he paid price for, and ransomed souls, so by the second part thereof, he continually maketh intercession to God for them that come. But he cannot allow us to question his faithful execution of his priesthood, therefore he cannot allow us once to think, that the coming sinner shall be cast out.

7. If Jesus Christ should allow us once to think, that the coming sinner shall be cast out, then he must allow us to question his will, or power, or merit to save. But he cannot allow us once to question any of these; therefore not once to think, that the coming sinner shall be cast out.

1. He cannot allow us to question his will; for he saith in the text, "I will in no wise cast out."

2. He cannot allow us to question his power; for the Holy Ghost saith, he is able to save to the uttermost them that come.

3. He cannot allow us to question his power; for the merit, for the blood of Christ cleanseth the comer from all sin; therefore he cannot allow that he that is coming to him should once think that he will cast them out.

8. If Jesus Christ would allow the coming sinner once to think that he will cast him out, he must allow him to give the lie to the manifest testimony of the Father, Son, and Spirit; yea, to the whole gospel contained in Moses, the prophets, the book of Psalms, and that commonly called the New Testament. But he cannot allow of this; therefore, not that the coming sinner should once think he will cast him out.

9. Lastly, if Jesus Christ should allow him that is coming to him once to think, that he will cast him out, he must allow him to question his Father's oath, which he in truth and righteousness hath taken, that they might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to Jesus Christ. But he cannot allow this, therefore he cannot allow, that the coming sinner should once think, that he will cast him out.

I come now to make some general use and application of the whole, and so to draw towards a conclusion.

1. The first use, a use of information: and it informeth us, That men by nature are far off from Christ.

Let me a little improve this use, by speaking to these three questions.

1. Where is he that is not coming to Jesus Christ?

2. What is he that is coming to Jesus Christ?

3. Whither is he to go that cometh not to Jesus Christ?

1. Where is he?

Answer. 1. He is far from God, he is without him, even alienated from him, both in his understanding, will, affections, and conscience.

2. He is far from Jesus Christ, who is the only deliverer of men from hell-fire.

3. He is far from the work of the Holy Ghost, the work of regeneration, and a second creation, without which no man shall see the kingdom of heaven.

4. He is far from being righteous, that righteousness that should make him acceptable in God's sight.

5. He is under the power and dominion of sin; sin reigneth in and over him; it dwelleth in every faculty of his soul, and member of his body; so that from head to foot there is no place clean.

6. He is in the pest-house with Uzziah, and excluded the camp of Israel with the lepers.

7. His life is among the unclean: "He is in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

8. He is in sin, in the flesh, in death in the snare of the devil, and is taken captive by him at his will.

9. He is under the curse of the law, and the devils dwell in him, and have the mastery of him.

10. He is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knows not whither he goes; for darkness has blinded his eyes.

11. He is in the broad way that leadeth to destruction, and holding on, he will assuredly go in at the broad gate, and so down the stairs to hell.

Secondly, What is he that cometh not to Jesus Christ?

1. He is counted one of God's enemies.

2. He is a child of the devil, and of hell; for the devil begat him, as to his sinful nature, and hell must swallow him at last, because he cometh not to Jesus Christ.

3. He is a child of wrath, an heir of it; it is his portion, and God will repay it him to his face.

4. He is a self-murderer; he wrongeth his own soul, and is one that loveth death.

5. He is a companion for devils, and damned men.

Thirdly, Where is he like to go that cometh not to Jesus Christ?

1. He that cometh not to him, is like to go farther from him; for every sin is a step farther from Jesus Christ.

2. As he is in darkness, so he is like to go on in it; for Christ is the light of the world, and he that comes not to him, walketh in darkness.

3. He is like to be removed at last, as

far from God and Christ, and heaven, and all felicity, as an infinite God can remove him.

But, Secondly, This doctrine of coming to Christ, informeth us, where poor destitute sinners may find life for their souls, and that is in Christ. This life is in his Son; he that hath the Son, hath life. And again, "Whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord."

Now, for farther enlargement, I will also here propound three more questions.

1. What life is in Christ?

2. Who may have it?

3. Upon what terms?

First, What life is in Jesus Christ?

1. There is justifying life in Christ. Man by sin is dead in law; and Christ only can deliver him by his righteousness and blood from this death into a state of life; "For God sent his Son into the world, that we might live through him;" that is, through the righteousness which he should accomplish, and the death that he should die.

2. There is eternal life in Christ; Life that is endless: life for ever and for ever. "He hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

Now, justification and eternal salvation being both in Christ, and no where else to be had for men, who would not come to Jesus Christ?

Secondly, Who may have this life?

I answer, poor, helpless, miserable sinners, Particularly,

1. Such as are willing to have it; "Whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life."

2. He that thirsteth for it: "I will give him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life."

3. He that is weary of his sins; "This is the rest, whereby you may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing."

4. He that is poor and needy, "He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy."

5. He that followeth after him, crieth for life: "He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Thirdly, Upon what terms may he have this life?

Answer. Freely, Sinner, dost thou hear? Thou mayest have it freely. Let him take of the water of life freely. I will give him of the fountain of the water of life freely: "And when they had nothing to pay, he freely forgave them both."

Freely, without money, or without price, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy and eat; Yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price."

Sinner, art thou thirsty? art thou weary? art thou willing? Come then, and re-

gard not your stuff; for all the good that is in Christ is offered to the coming sinner without money and without price. He has life to give way to such as want it and that have not a penny to purchase it; and he will give it freely. Oh, what a blessed condition is the coming sinner in!

But thirdly, This doctrine of coming to Jesus Christ for life, informeth us, that it is to be had no where else. Might it be had any where else, the text, and him that spoke it, would be but little set by; for what great matter is there in, "I will in no wise cast out," if another stood by that would receive them? But here appears the glory of Christ, that none but he can save. And here appears his love, that though none can save but he, yet he is not coy in saving. "But him that cometh to me," saith he, "I will in no wise cast out."

That none can save but Jesus Christ, is evident, from Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there salvation in any other: and he hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." If life could have been had any where else, it should have been in the law: But it is not in the law; for by the deeds of the law, no man living shall be justified, then no life.

Therefore life is no where to be had, but in Jesus Christ.

Question. But why would God so order it, that life should be had no where else but in Jesus Christ?

Answer. There is reason for it, and that both with respect to God and us.

First, with respect to God.

1. That it might be in a way of justice, as well as mercy: and, in a way of justice, it could not have been, if it had not been by Christ; because he, and he only, was able to answer the demand of the law, and give for sin, what the justice thereof required. All angels had been crushed down to hell for ever, had that curse been laid upon them for our sins, which was laid upon Jesus Christ; but it was laid upon him, and he bare it; and answered the penalty, and redeemed his people from under it, with that satisfaction to divine justice, that God himself doth now proclaim, that he is faithful and just to forgive us, if by faith, we shall venture to Jesus, and trust to what he has done, for life.

2. Life must be by Jesus Christ, that God might be adored and magnified for finding out this way. This is the Lord's doings, that in all things he might be glorified through Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. It must be by Jesus Christ, that life might be at God's dispose, who hath great pity for the poor, the lowly, the meek, the broken in heart, and for them that others care not for.

4. Life must be in Christ, to cut off



boasting from the lips of men. This also is the apostle's reason.

Secondly, Life must be in Jesus Christ with respect to us.

1. That we might have it upon the easiest terms; to wit, freely as a gift, not as wages. Was it in his Moses's hand, we should hardly come at it. Was it in the people's hand, we should pay soundly for it. But thanks be to God, it is in Christ, laid up in him, and by him to be communicated to sinners upon easy terms, even to receiving, accepting, and embracing with thanksgiving; as the scriptures plainly declare.

2. Life is in Christ for us, that it might not be upon so brittle a foundation, as indeed it would, had it been any where else. The law itself is weak because of us, as to this: but Christ is a tried stone, a sure foundation, one that will not fail to bear thy burden, and to receive thy soul, coming sinner.

3. Life is in Christ, that it might be sure to all the seed. Alas! the best of us, was life left in our hands, to be sure we should forfeit it, over, and over, and over; or, was it in any other hand, we should, by our often backslidings, so offend him, that, at last, he would shut up his bowels in everlasting displeasure against us. But now it is in Christ; it is with one that can pity, pray for, pardon, yea, multiply pardons; it is with one that can have compassion upon us, when we are out of the way, with one that hath a heart to fetch us again, when we are gone astray, with one that can pardon without upbraiding. Blessed be God, that life is in Christ! for now it is sure to all the seed.

But, fourthly, this doctrine of coming to Jesus Christ for life, informs us of the evil of unbelief; that wicked thing that is the only or chief hindrance to the coming sinner. Doth the text say, *Come*? Doth it say, "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out?" then what an evil is that that keepeth sinners from coming to Jesus Christ? And that evil is unbelief: for by faith we come; by unbelief we keep away. Therefore, it is said to be that by which a soul is said to depart from God: because, it was that which, at first, caused the world to go off from him, and that also that keeps them from him to this day. And it doth it the more easily, because it doth it with a wile.

This sin may be called *the white devil*, for, it oftentimes, in its mischievous doing in the soul, shows as if it were an angel of light: yea, it acteth like a counsellor of heaven. Therefore, a little to discourse of this evil disease.

1. It is that sin, above all others, that hath some show of reason in its attempts.

For it keeps the soul from Christ, by pretending its present unfitness and unpreparedness: as want of more sense of sin, want of more repentance, want of more humility, want of a more broken heart.

2. It is the sin that most suiteth with the conscience; the conscience of the coming sinner tells him, that he hath nothing good; that he stands indictable for ten thousand talents; that he is a very ignorant, blind, and hard-hearted sinner, unworthy to be once taken notice of by Jesus Christ; and will you, says Unbelief, in such a case as you now are, presume to come to Jesus Christ?

3. It is the sin that most suiteth with our sense of feeling. The coming sinner feels the workings of sin, of all manner of sin and wretchedness in his flesh: he also feels the wrath and judgment of God due to sin, and oftentimes staggers under it. Now, says Unbelief, you may see you have no grace; for that which works in you is corruption. You may also perceive that God doth not love you, because the sense of his wrath abides upon you. Therefore, how can you bear the face to come to Jesus Christ.

4. It is that sin, above all others, that most suiteth the wisdom of our flesh. The wisdom of our flesh thinks it prudence to question awhile, to stand back awhile, to hearken to both sides awhile: and not to be rash, sudden, or unadvised, in too bold a presuming upon Jesus Christ. And this wisdom Unbelief falls in with.

5. It is the sin, above all others, that continually is whispering the soul in the ear with mistrusts of the faithfulness of God, in keeping promise to them that come to Jesus Christ for life. It also suggests mistrusts about Christ's willingness to receive it, and save it. And no sin can do this so artificially as unbelief.

6. It is also that sin which is always at hand to enter an objection against this or that promise, that by the Spirit of God is brought to our heart to comfort us; and if the poor coming sinner is not aware of it, it will, by some exaction, slight, trick, or cavil, quickly wrest from him the promise again, and he shall have but little benefit of it.

7. It is that above all other sins, that weakens our prayers, our faith, our love, our diligence, our hope, and expectations: it even taketh the heart away from God in duty.

8. Lastly, This sin, as I have said even now, it appears in the soul with so many sweet pretences to safety and security, that it is, as it were, counsel sent from heaven, bidding the soul to be wise, wary, considerate, well advised, and to take heed of too rash a venture upon believing. Be sure, first, that God loves you; take hold of no

promise until you are forced by God unto it; neither be you sure of your salvation; doubt it still, though the testimony of the Lord has been often confirmed in you. Live not by faith, but by sense; and when you can neither see nor feel, then fear and mistrust, then doubt and question all. This is the devilish counsel of Unbelief, which is so covered over with specious pretences, that the wisest Christian can hardly shake off these reasonings.

But to be brief: let me here give the Christian reader a more particular description of the qualities of unbelief, by opposing faith unto it, in these twenty-five particulars.

1. Faith believeth the word of God, but unbelief questioneth the certainty of the same.

2. Faith believeth the word, because it is true; but unbelief doubteth thereof, because it is true.

3. Faith sees more in a promise of God to help than in all other things to hinder; but unbelief, notwithstanding God's promise, saith, how can these things be?

4. Faith will make thee see love in the heart of Christ, when with his mouth he giveth reproofs; but unbelief will imagine wrath in his heart, when with his mouth and word he saith he loves us.

5. Faith will help the soul to wait, though God defers to give; but unbelief will take snuff and throw up all, if God makes any tarrying.

6. Faith will give comfort in the midst of fears; but unbelief causeth fears in the midst of comforts.

7. Faith will suck sweetness out of God's rod, but unbelief can find no comfort in its greatest mercies.

8. Faith maketh great burdens light; but unbelief maketh light ones intolerably heavy.

9. Faith helpeth us when we are down; but unbelief throws us down when we are up.

10. Faith bringeth us near to God when we are far from him; but unbelief puts us far from God when we are near to him.

11. Where faith reigns, it declareth them to be the friends of God; but where unbelief reigns, it declareth them to be his enemies.

12. Faith putteth a man under grace; but unbelief holdeth him under wrath.

13. Faith purifieth the heart; but unbelief keepeth it polluted and impure.

14. By faith, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us; but by unbelief we are shut up under the law to perish.

15. Faith maketh our work acceptable to God through Christ; but whatsoever is of unbelief is sin: for without faith it is impossible to please him.

16. Faith giveth us peace and comfort in our souls; but unbelief worketh trouble and tossings, like the restless waves of the sea.

17. Faith maketh us see preciousness in Christ; but unbelief sees no form, beauty, or comeliness in him.

18. By faith, we have our life in Christ's fulness; but by unbelief we starve and pine away.

19. Faith gives us the victory over the law, sin, death, the devil, and all evils; but unbelief layeth us obnoxious to them all.

20. Faith will show us more excellency in things not seen, than in them that are; but unbelief sees more of things that are, than in things that will be hereafter.

21. Faith makes the ways of God pleasant and admirable; but unbelief maketh them heavy and hard.

22. By faith Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, possessed the land of promise; but because of unbelief, neither Aaron, nor Moses, nor Miriam, could get thither.

23. By faith the children of Israel passed through the Red sea; but, by unbelief, the generality of them perished in the wilderness.

24. By faith, Gideon did more with three hundred men, and a few empty pitchers, than all the twelve tribes could do, because they believed not God.

25. By faith, Peter walked on the water; but by unbelief, he began to sink.

Thus might many more be added, which, for brevity's sake, I omit, beseeching every one that thinketh he hath a soul to save, or be damned, to take heed of unbelief; lest seeing there is a promise left us of entering into his rest, any of us, by unbelief, should indeed come short of it.

II. The second use: a use of examination.

We come to a use of examination. Sinner, thou hast heard of the necessity of coming to Christ; also, of the willingness of Christ to receive the coming soul; together with the benefit that they, by him, shall have that indeed come to him. Put thyself now upon this serious inquiry, am I indeed come to Jesus Christ?

Motives plenty I might here urge, to prevail with thee to a conscientious performance of this duty: as,

1. Thou art in sin, in the flesh, in death, in the snare of the devil, and under the curse of the law, if you are not coming to Jesus Christ.

2. There is no way to be delivered from these, but by coming to Jesus Christ.

3. If thou comest, Jesus Christ will receive thee, and will in no wise cast thee out.

4. Thou wilt not repent it in the day of judgment if thou now comest to Jesus Christ.



5. But thou wilt surely mourn at last, if now thou shalt refuse to come. And,

6. Lastly. Now, thou hast been invited to come; now wilt thy judgment be greater, and thy damnation more fearful, if thou shalt yet refuse, than if thou hast never heard of coming to Christ.

*Objection.* But we hope we are come to Jesus Christ.

*Answer.* It is well if it proves so. But lest thou shouldst speak without ground, and so fall unawares into hell-fire, let us examine a little.

First. Art thou indeed coming to Jesus Christ? What hast thou left behind thee? What didst thou come away from, in thy coming to Jesus Christ?

When Lot came out of Sodom, he left the Sodomites behind him.

When Abraham came out of Chaldea, he left his country and kindred behind.

When Ruth came to put her trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel, she left her father and mother, her gods, and the land of her nativity, behind her.

When Peter came to Christ, he left his nets behind him.

When Zaccheus came to Christ, he left the receipt of custom behind him.

When Paul came to Christ, he left his own righteousness behind him.

When those that used curious arts came to Jesus Christ, they took their curious books and burned them, though in another man's eye they were counted worth fifty thousand pieces of silver.

What sayest thou man? Hast thou left thy darling sins, thy Sodomitish pleasures, thy acquaintance and vain companions, thy unlawful gain, thy idol gods, thy righteousness, and thy unlawful curious arts behind thee? If any of these be with thee, and thou with them, in thy heart and life, thou art not yet come to Jesus Christ.

Secondly. Art thou come to Jesus Christ? Prithce, tell me, what moved thee to come to Jesus Christ? Men do not usually come or go, to this or that place, before they have a moving cause, or rather a cause moving them thereto: no more do they come to Jesus Christ (I do not say before they have a cause, but) before that cause moveth them to come. What sayest thou? Hast thou a cause moving thee to come? To be at present in a state of condemnation, is cause sufficient for men to come to Jesus Christ for life: but that will not do, except the cause move them, the which it will never do until their eyes be opened to see themselves in that condition. For it is not a man's being under wrath, but his seeing it, that moveth him to come to Jesus Christ. Alas! all men by sin are under wrath; yet but few of that all come to Jesus Christ; and the reason is because they

do not see their condition. "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Until men are warned, and also receive the warning, they will not come to Jesus Christ.

Take three or four instances for this.

1. Adam and Eve came not to Jesus Christ until they received the alarm, the conviction of their undone state by sin.

2. The children of Israel cried not out for a mediator before they saw themselves in danger of death by the law.

3. Before the publican came, he saw himself lost and undone.

4. The prodigal came not, until he saw death at the door, ready to devour him.

5. The three thousand men came not, until they knew not what to do to be saved.

6. Paul came not, until he saw himself lost and undone.

7. Lastly. Before the jailer came, he saw himself undone. And I tell thee, it is an easier thing to persuade a well man to go to the physician for cure, or a man without hurt to seek a plaister to cure him, than it is to persuade a man that sees not his soul-disease, to come to Jesus Christ. The whole have no need of a physician; then why should they go to him? The full pitcher can hold no more; then why should it go to the fountain? And if thou comest full, thou comest not aright; and be sure, Christ will send the empty away: "But he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

Thirdly. Art thou coming to Jesus Christ; prithce, tell me, what seest thou in him to allure thee to forsake all the world, to come to him? I say, what hast thou seen in him? Men must see somewhat in Jesus Christ, else they will not come to him.

1. What comeliness hast thou seen in his person? thou comest not, if thou seest no form, nor comeliness in him.

2. Until those mentioned in the song were convinced that there was more beauty, comeliness and desirableness, in Christ, than in ten thousand, they did not so much as ask where he was, nor incline to turn aside after him.

There be many things on this side heaven that can and do carry away the heart; and so will do, so long as thou livest, if thou shalt be kept blind, and not be admitted to see the beauty of the Lord Jesus.

Fourthly. Art thou come to the Lord Jesus? what hast thou found in him, since thou comest to him?

Peter found with him the word of eternal life.

They that Peter makes mention of, found him a living stone, even such a living stone as communicated life to them.

He saith himself, they that come to him

&c. shall find rest unto their souls; has thou found rest in him for thy soul?

Let us go back to the times of the Old Testament.

1. Abraham found that in him, that made him leave his country for him, and become for his sake a pilgrim and stranger in the earth.

2. Moses found that in him, that made him forsake a crown, a kingdom for him too.

3. David found so much in him, that he counted to be in his house one day was better than a thousand; yea to be a door-keeper therein, was better in his esteem, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

4. What did Daniel and the three children find in him, to make them run the hazards of the fiery furnace, and the den of lions, for his sake?

Let us come down to martyrs.

1. Stephen found that in him, that made him joyful, and quietly yield up his life for his name.

2. Ignatius found that in him, that made him choose to go through the torments of the devil, and hell itself: rather than not to have him. (Acts and Monuments, vol. 4. page 25.)

3. What saw Romanus in Christ, when he said to the raging emperor, who threatened him with fearful torments, Thy sentence, O emperor, I joyfully embrace, and refuse not to be sacrificed—by as cruel torments as thou canst invent! (page 116.)

4. What saw Menas the Egyptian, in Christ when he said, under most cruel torments, there is nothing in my mind that can be compared to the kingdom of heaven; neither is all the world, if it was weighed in a balance, to be preferred with the price of one soul! Who is able to separate us from the love of Jesus Christ our Lord? And I have learned of my Lord and king not to fear them that kill the body, &c. (p. 117.)

5. What did Euliah see in Christ, when she said, as they were pulling her one joint from another; Behold, O Lord, I will not forget thee: What a pleasure is it for them, O Christ! that remember thy triumphant victory! (p. 121.)

6. What think you did Agnes see in Christ, when rejoicingly she went to meet the soldier, that was appointed to be her executioner; I will willingly, said she receive into my paps the length of this sword, and into my breast will draw the force thereof, even to the hilts; that thus I, being married to Christ my spouse, may surmount and escape all the darkness of this world! (p. 122.)

7. What do you think did Julietta see in Christ, when at the emperor's telling of her, that except she would worship the gods,

she should never have protection, laws, judgments, nor life? She replied, farewell life, welcome death; farewell riches, welcome poverty. All that I have, if it were a thousand times more, would I give, rather than to speak one wicked and blasphemous word against my Creator. (p. 123.)

8. What did Marcus Arethusius see in Christ, when, after his enemies did cut his flesh, anointed it with honey, and hanged him up in a basket for flies and bees to feed on, he would not give (to uphold idolatry) one half-penny to save his life? (p. 119.)

9. What did Constantine see in Christ, when he used to kiss the wounds of them that suffered for him? (p. 135.)

10. But what need I give thus particular instances of words and smaller actions, when, by their lives, their blood, their enduring hunger, sword, fire, pulling asunder, and all torments that the devil and hell could devise, they showed their love to Christ, after they were come to him?

What hast thou found in him, sinner?

What! come to Christ, and find nothing in him, when all things that are worth looking for are in him, or if any thing, yet not enough to wean thee from thy sinful delights, and fleshly lusts! Away; thou art not coming to Jesus Christ.

He that is come to Jesus Christ, hath found in him, that, as I said, that is not to be found any where else. As,

1. He that is come to Christ hath found God in him reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses to them; and so God is not to be found in heaven and earth besides.

2. He that is come to Jesus Christ, hath found in him a fountain of grace, sufficient, not only to pardon sin, but to sanctify the soul, and to preserve it from falling in this evil world.

3. He that is come to Jesus Christ, hath found virtue in him, that virtue, that if he does but touch thee with his words, or thou him by faith, life is forthwith conveyed into thy soul; it makes thee wake as one that is waked out of his sleep; it awakes all the powers of the soul.

4. Art thou come to Jesus Christ? thou hast found glory in him, glory that surmounts and goes beyond. "Thou art more glorious than the mountains of prey."

5. What shall I say? Thou hast found righteousness in him; thou hast found rest, peace, delight, heaven, glory, and eternal life.

Sinner, be advised; ask thy heart again; saying, am I come to Jesus Christ? for upon this one question, Am I come, or am I not? hangs heaven and hell as to thee. If thou canst say, I am come, and God shall approve that saying, happy, happy,



happy man art thou! but if thou art not come, what can make thee happy? Yea, what can make that man happy, that for his not coming to Jesus Christ for life, must be damned in hell?

III. The third use; a use of encouragement.

Coming sinner, I have now a word for thee; be of good comfort. "He will in no wise cast out." Of all men, thou art the blessed of the Lord; the Father hath prepared his son to be a sacrifice for thee, and Jesus Christ, thy Lord, is gone to prepare a place for thee.

What shall I say to thee? thou comest to a full Christ; thou canst not want any thing, for soul or body, for this world or that to come, but it is to be had in or by Jesus Christ.

As it is said of the land that the Danites went to possess, so, and with much more truth it may be said of Christ, he is such an one, with whom there is no want of any good thing that is in heaven or earth.

A full Christ is thy Christ.

1. He is full of grace. Grace is sometimes taken for love; never any loved like Jesus Christ. Jonathan's love went beyond the love of women; but the love of Christ passes knowledge. It is beyond the love of all the earth, of all creatures, even of men and angels. His love prevailed with him to lay aside his glory, to leave the heavenly place, to clothe himself with flesh, to be born in a stable, to be laid in a manger, to live a poor life in the world, to take upon him our sickness, infirmities, sins, curse, death, and the wrath that was due to man. And all this he did for a base, undeserving, unthankful people; yea, for a people that was at enmity with him. "For, when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, than, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved by his life. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

2. He is full of truth. Full of grace and truth. Truth, that is, faithfulness in keeping promise, even this of the text, (with all others,) "I will in no wise cast out." Hence, it is said, that his words are true, and that he is the faithful God, that keepeth covenants. And hence it is also that his promises are called truth, "Thou wilt fulfil thy truth unto Jacob, and thy mercy unto Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." Therefore

it is said again, that both himself and words are truth, "I am the truth," "the scriptures of truth," "thy word is truth," "thy law is truth," "and my mouth," saith he, "shall speak truth."

Now I say, his word is truth, and he is full of truth to fulfil his truth, even to a thousand generations. Coming sinner, he will not deceive thee; come boldly to Jesus Christ.

3. He is full of wisdom: He is made unto us of God wisdom; wisdom to manage the affairs of his church in general, and the affairs of every coming sinner in particular. And upon this account he is said to be "head over all things," because he manages all things that are in the world by his wisdom, for the good of his church: all men's actions, all Satan's temptations, all God's providences, and crosses, and disappointments; all things whatever, are under the hand of Christ, (who is the wisdom of God,) and he ordereth them all for good to his church: And can Christ help it, (and be sure he can,) nothing shall happen or fall out in the world, but it shall, in despite of all opposition, have a good tendency to his church and people.

4. He is full of the Spirit to communicate it to the coming sinner; he hath therefore received it without measure, that he may communicate it to every member of his body, according as every man's measure thereof is allotted him by the Father. Wherefore he saith, that he that comes to him, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

5. He is indeed a store-house full of all the graces of the Spirit. "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Here is more faith, more love, more sincerity more humility, more of every grace; and of this, even more of this, he giveth to every lowly, humble, penitent, coming sinner: wherefore, coming soul, thou comest not to a barren wilderness, when thou comest to Jesus Christ.

6. He is full of bowels of compassion; and they shall feel and find it so that come to him for life. He can bear with thy weakness, he can pity thy ignorance, he can be touched with the feeling of thy infirmities, he can affectionately forgive thy transgressions, he can heal thy backslidings, and love thee freely. His compassions fail not; "and he will not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax: he can pity them that no eye pities, and be afflicted in all thy afflictions."

7. Coming soul, the Jesus that thou art coming to is full of might and terribleness, for thy advantage he can suppress all thine enemies; he is the prince of the kings of the earth; he can bow all men's designs for thy help; he can break all snares laid

for thee in the way; he can lift thee out of all difficulties, wherewith thou mayest be surrounded; he is wise in heart, and mighty in power. Every life under heaven is in his hand; yea, the fallen angels tremble before him: And he will save thy life, coming sinner.

8. Coming sinner, the Jesus to whom thou art coming is lowly in heart, he despiseth not any. It is not thy outward meanness, nor thy inward weakness; it is not because thou art poor, or base, or deformed or a fool, that he will despise thee: he hath chosen the foolish, the base and despised things of this world to confound the wise and mighty. He will bow his ear to thy stammering prayers; he will pick out the meaning of thy inexpressible groans; he will respect thy weakest offering, if there be in it but thy heart.

Now is not this a blessed Christ, coming sinner? Art thou not like to fare well, when thou hast embraced him, coming sinner? But,

Secondly, Thou hast yet another advantage by Jesus Christ, thou art coming to him, for he is not only full but free. He is not sparing of what he has; he is open-hearted, and open-handed. Let me in a few particulars show thee this:

1. This is evident, because he calls thee; he calls upon thee to come unto him; the which he would not do, was he not free to give; yea, he bids thee when come, ask, seek, knock: And for thy encouragement adds to every command a promise, "Seek, and ye shall find; Ask, and ye shall have; Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." If the rich man should say thus to the poor, would not he be reckoned a free-hearted man? I say, should he say to the poor, Come to my door, ask at my door, knock at my door, and you shall find and have; would he not be counted liberal? Why thus doth Jesus Christ. Mind it, coming sinner.

2. He doth not only bid thee come, but tells thee, he will heartily do the good; yea, he will do it with rejoicing: "I will rejoice over them, to do them good with my whole heart and with my whole soul."

3. It appears that he is free, because he giveth without twitting. "He gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." There are some that will not deny to do the poor a pleasure, but they will mix their mercies with so many twits, that the persons on whom they bestow their charity, shall find but little sweetness in it. But Christ doth not do so, coming sinner: he casteth all thine iniquities behind his back; thy sins and iniquities he will remember no more.

4. That Christ is free, is manifest by the complaints that he makes against them that will not come to him for mercy. I say, he

complains, saying, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" I say, he speaks it, by way of complaint. He saith also in another place, "But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob." Coming sinner, see here the willingness of Christ to save; see here how free he is to communicate life, and all good things, to such as thou art: He complains, if thou comest not; he is displeased if thou callest not upon him.

Hark, coming sinner, once again; when Jerusalem would not come to him for safeguard, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

5. Lastly. He is open and free-hearted to do thee good, as is seen by the joy and rejoicing that he manifesteth at the coming home of poor prodigals: He receives the lost sheep with rejoicing; the lost goat with rejoicing; yea, when the prodigal came home, what joy and mirth, what music and dancing, was in his father's house!

Thirdly. Coming sinner, I will add another encouragement for thy help.

1. God hath prepared a mercy-seat, a throne of grace to sit on: that thou mayest come thither to him, and that he may from thence hear thee, and receive thee: "I will commune with thee," saith he, "from above the mercy-seat."

As who shall say, sinner, When thou comest to me, thou shalt find me upon the mercy-seat, where also I am always found of the undone coming sinner: Thither I bring my pardon; there I hear and receive their petitions and accept them to my favor.

2. God hath also prepared a golden altar for thee to offer thy prayers and tears upon. A golden altar! It is called a *golden altar*, to show what worth it is of in God's account; for this golden altar is Jesus Christ; this altar sanctifies thy gift, and makes thy sacrifice acceptable. This altar then makes thy groans golden groans; thy tears golden tears, and thy prayers golden prayers, in the eye of that God thou comest to, coming sinner.

3. God hath strewed all the way (from the gate of hell, where thou wast, to the gate of heaven whither thou art going,) with flowers out of his own garden. Behold how the promises, invitations, calls, and encouragements, like lilies, lie round about thee! (take heed thou dost not tread them under foot, sinner,) with promises did I say? Yea, he hath mixed all those with his own name, his Son's name; also with the name of mercy, goodness, com-



passion, love, pity, grace, forgiveness, pardon, and what not, that may encourage the coming sinner.

4. He hath also for thy encouragement laid up the names, and set forth the sins of those that have been saved: In his book they are fairly written, that thou through patience and comfort of the scriptures mightest have hope.

1st. In this book is recorded Noah's main and sin; and how God had mercy upon him.

2dly. In this record is fairly written the name of Lot, and the nature of his sin; and how the Lord had mercy upon him.

3dly. In this record thou hast also fairly written the names of Moses, Aaron, Gideon, Sampson, David, Solomon, Peter, Paul, with the nature of their sins, and how God had mercy upon them; and all to encourage thee, coming sinner.

Fourthly, I will add yet another encouragement for the man that is coming to Jesus Christ Art thou coming? Art thou coming indeed? Why,

1. This thy coming is by virtue of God's call; Thou art called. Calling goes before coming: coming is not of works, but of him that calleth. He went up into a mountain, and called to him whom he would, and they came to him.

2. Art thou coming? This is also by the virtue of illumination: God has made thee see, and therefore thou art coming. So long as thou wast darkness, thou lovedst darkness, and couldst not abide to come, because thy deeds were evil, but being now illuminated and made to see, what and where thou art, and also what and where thy Saviour is, now thou art coming to Jesus Christ; "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee," saith Christ, "but my Father which is in heaven."

3. Art thou coming? This is because God has inclined thine heart to come. God hath called thee, illuminated thee, and inclined thy heart to come; and therefore thou comest to Jesus Christ. It is God that worketh in thee to *will*, and to come to Jesus Christ. Coming sinner, bless God for that he hath given thee a *will* to come to Jesus Christ. It is a sign that thou becomest to Jesus Christ, because God has made thee willing to come to him. Bless

God for slaying the enemy of thy mind; had he not done it, thou wouldst as yet have hated thine own salvation.

4. Art thou coming to Jesus Christ? *It is God that giveth thee power; power to pursue thy will* in matters of thy salvation, is the gift of God. "It is God that worketh in you both to *will* and to *do*." Not that God worketh *will* to come, where he gives no power; but that thou shouldst take notice, that power is an additional mercy. The church saw that *will* and *power*, were two things, when she cried, "Draw me, and we will run after thee," and so did David too, when he said, "I will run the ways of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." Will to come, and power to pursue thy will, is double mercy, coming sinner.

5. All thy strange, passionate, sudden rushings forward after Jesus Christ, (coming sinners know what I mean) they also are thy helps from God. Perhaps thou feelest at sometimes more than at others, strong stirrings up of heart to fly to Jesus Christ; now thou hast at this time a sweet and stiff gale of the Spirit of God, filling thy sails with the fresh gales of his good Spirit; and thou ridest at those times as upon the wings of the wind, being carried out beyond thyself, beyond the most of thy prayers, and also above all thy fears and temptations.

6. Coming sinner, hast thou not now and then a kiss of the sweet lips of Jesus Christ, I mean some blessed word dropping like a honey-comb upon thy soul to receive thee, when thou art in the midst of thy dumps?

7. Does not Jesus Christ sometimes give thee a glimpse of himself, though perhaps thou seest him not so long a time as while one may tell twenty?

8. Hast thou not sometimes as it were the very warmth of his wings overshadowing the face of thy soul, that gives thee as it were a glow upon thy spirit, as the bright beams of the sun do upon thy body, when it suddenly breaks out of a cloud, though presently all is gone away!

Well, all these things are the good hand of thy God upon thee, and they are upon thee to constrain, to provoke, and to make thee willing and able to come, coming sinner, that thou mightest in the end be saved.

# DR. GRIFFIN'S

## LETTER ON COMMUNION.

A LETTER ON COMMUNION AT THE LORD'S TABLE: ADDRESSED TO A MEMBER OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH. BY THE REV. EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D. D. PRESIDENT OF WILLIAM'S COLLEGE.

*Williams' College, March 25th, 1829.*

DEAR SIR,—IN our late interview, you professed yourself an advocate for open communion, and requested me to give the reasons which operates in my mind in favor of that practice.

I do this with the more pleasure because some of my earliest associations attached me to the members and preachers of your communion, and awakened feelings of kindness which have accompanied me through life. I have repeatedly exchanged pulpits with your ministers. I have dismissed members from my church to join your churches. I have always considered baptism by immersion as valid; and were I imperiously called upon by the conscience of an applicant, and could do it without offence to others, I should have no hesitation in administering the ordinance in this form. In short, I regard your churches as churches of Christ. The question is, Is it reasonable in them so to regard us?

The separating point is not about the subjects of baptism, but merely the mode. If we could be considered as fairly baptized, our Baptist brethren certainly would not exclude us merely because we apply the seal to infants. Many greater mistakes, (allowing this to be one,) are made by those whom we do not exclude from our communion.

I agree with the advocates for close communion in two points: 1. That baptism is the initiating ordinance which introduces us into the visible church: of course, where there is no baptism there are no visible churches: 2. That we ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, and of course are not church members, even if we regard them as Christians. Should a pious Quaker so far depart from his principles as to wish to commune with me at the Lord's table, while yet he refused to be baptized, I could not receive him; because there is such a relationship established between the two ordinances, that I have no right to separate them; in other words, I have no right to send the sacred elements out of the church.

The only question then is, whether those associations of evangelical Christians that call themselves churches, and that practice sprinkling are real churches of Christ; in other words whether baptism by sprinkling is valid baptism.

In my subsequent remarks I will assume (though I do not admit,) that immersion is the better form of baptism and that we have misjudged as to the most suitable mode. The question is, Is this mistake so radical as to destroy the validity of the ordinance? I offer the following reasons against the exclusive system.

1. In the nature of things the validity of the ordinance cannot depend on the quantity of water, for the end is essentially answered by less as well as by more. Water, if the ocean were applied, could not wash out sin. It is only an emblem; an emblem which voluntarily used, is a profession of faith in a purifying Saviour. Now if water be applied to the body, (though only to a part,) as an emblem of purification, and as a profession of faith, and from sincere respect to the authority of Christ, what more can an emblem do? What more could immersion do, unless to render the emblem still more significant?

2. We have authority for saying that an emblem of purification applied to a part of the body, is as effectual as if applied to the whole body. It is found in what our Saviour said to Peter on the occasion of washing his feet: "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answering him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me. [Meaning, If I do not produce that inward cleansing of which this is an emblem.] Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands, and my head. Jesus saith unto him, he that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit;" (John xiii. 8—10.) that is, is stamped with a full emblem of universal purity.

3. If the exact form of baptism were essential to its validity, the form would have been so clearly defined that no honest mind could mistake it. The old dispensation, was a dispensation of ceremonies, and



therefore the validity of its ordinances depend on an exact adherence to the forms prescribed. Nadab and Abihu were slain for burning incense with fire taken from the hearth instead of the altar. (Lev. x. 1. &c. Numb. viii. 4.) Every thing therefore was minutely and most explicitly prescribed, even to the putting of the blood upon the tip of the ear, and to the least pin and fringe of the tabernacle. Moses was commanded to "make all things according to the pattern" shown him in the mount. (Heb. viii. 5, with Exod. xxv. 9, 40.) The new dispensation is distinguished with greater light. If, therefore, the validity of any of its ordinances depended on their precise form, that form would have been as clearly defined at least as the forms of that darker dispensation. But,

4. There seems not to be a single form under the new dispensation so precisely defined, but that different denominations may and do practise differently without transgression. There is a great variety in the manner of their keeping the supper, administering baptism, performing prayer, and conducting all the forms of public worship. Unless therefore we condemn the whole, or nearly the whole church, we must admit that the validity of no ordinance under the gospel depends on its precise form. And this might be expected from a dispensation known to be spiritual, and not a dispensation of ceremonies; that is to say, a dispensation under which spiritual things are exposed in their own naked nature, and not set forth chiefly by pictures, on the exactness of which the whole exhibition depends.

In regard to baptism, none will pretend that the form is expressly prescribed, like the forms under the old dispensation. The disputants about the mode rely, on both sides, on the history and incidental remarks found in the New Testament. But laying aside the Baptism of John, which we hold did not belong to the New Testament dispensation, (for a testament is not of force till after the death of the testator; Heb. ix. 15, 16.) and the baptism of Christ, which was received from John, and which, we hold, was only his ordination to the priestly office; laying these aside, and confining the attention to that baptism which was instituted after the death and resurrection of the "Testator," and was administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and the mode is left so uncertain that the most honest minds may be supposed to differ about it. If two perfectly holy men had been brought up in the centre of the earth, and on arriving at the surface should have a Bible put into their hands, and be requested to tell how the apostles baptized;

and one should happen to fall upon the case of the Eunuch, and the other upon the scene at pentecost, (where three thousand seem to have been baptized by eleven men in a single afternoon, on the top of a high hill, in the centre of a populous city, and far from any river or brook deep enough for immersion;) there would be an equal chance that they would bring in different reports. Could things be left so uncertain if the validity of the ordinance, and the very existence of a visible church, depended on the precise form of baptism?

5. If nothing but immersion is baptism, there is no visible church except among the Baptists. But certainly God has owned other associations of Christians as churches. He has poured his Spirit upon them in their assemblies, and what is more decisive, at the table of the Lord; and has communed with them and built them up by means of that ordinance which, were they not churches, it would not be profanity to approach.

What is a church? It is a company of believers, in covenant with God, essentially organized according to the gospel, holding the essential doctrines, and practising the essential duties. If you demand more, you may not find a church on earth.

Now here are associations of true believers, (our Baptist brethren will allow this,) who have entered into covenant with God, and sincerely observe all his ordinances *as they understand them*, and differ in nothing from the Baptist construction but in a *mere form*, and maintain all the essential doctrines, and spread around them the savor of the Redeemer's name by their holy examples and evangelical efforts, and are owned of God by the effusions of his Spirit, and are among the chosen instruments—are a great majority of the chosen instruments,—to carry the gospel to the heathen. And after all, are they to be disowned as churches of Christ?

6. If our Christian associations are not churches, our preachers are not church members; are not baptized; and therefore have no right to preach, and certainly are not ministers of Christ: (for how can one be an officer of the church who is not a member?) and therefore have no right to administer the Lord's supper, (to say nothing of baptism,) and are guilty of awful profanity in doing this. And yet these profane intruders into holy things, instead of being driven from the earth, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, are owned of God, are made the chosen instruments of promoting revivals of religion, of saving the souls of men, of spreading the gospel at home, of sending it to the heathen, and of doing more than half that is done to extend the kingdom of Christ on earth. And they are

owned as lawful preachers even by the Baptists themselves, who come to hear them, and whose ministers exchange pulpits with them.

7. The spirit of love and union which Christ inculcated upon his disciples, and by which the world was to know that God had sent him, binds evangelical churches with each other. This spirit has made a wonderful advance within the last thirty years, and is one of the leading characteristics of the present day, and has come in with those other glorious changes which all Christians ascribe to God, and which are manifestly putting things forward towards the millennial state. And this spirit, according to all prophecy, must go on increasing, and banish the hideous spectre of bigotry from the world, before the happiest period of the church can be ushered in.

A noble advance has been made by our Baptist brethren in England. Many advocates for open communion have there risen up, among whom stands conspicuous the celebrated Robert Hall. In America, at the head of the liberal class stood the late excellent Dr. Sillman of Boston, who was beloved by all the churches in that city

and respected by Christians throughout the United States.

8. Bigotry, which is a prejudiced zeal for party distinctions, is a party spirit in religion; and a party spirit, whether in religion or politics, is a selfish spirit. It is a setting up of mine against thine. Selfishness will certainly array itself against my argument. It is always giving undue importance to those points in which our denomination differs from others, not only because it is ours, but in order to shut our adherents in by a sort of impassable gulf. All the depravity of religious men, unless much enlightened, tends this way. Good men ought therefore to be always on their guard against this gravitation of their corrupt nature, and always struggling after that generous spirit of disinterested love which will embrace all that belongs to Christ.

You are at liberty, according to your request, to publish this for the use of your friends.

With sincere wishes for your happiness and for the prosperity of your churches I am, dear Sir, your friend and brother.

EDWARD D. GRIFFIN.

## PROFESSOR RIPLEY'S REVIEW

OF

DR. GRIFFIN'S

LETTER ON COMMUNION.

WE are glad that Dr. Griffin does not lend the weight of his authority to those who maintain the untenable position that baptism is a matter of little importance. His well known decision, and independence and confidence in vindicating what he deems to be the truth, would prepare us to expect from him something definite and tangible.

This letter traces the controversy respecting the Lord's supper to the right source; namely, error respecting baptism. Baptism it expressly maintains to be "the initiating ordinance which introduces us

into the visible church;" it also asserts "that we ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, even if we regard them as Christians." From this "relationship established between the two ordinances," it might be anticipated that the principal effort of Dr. Griffin, in order to maintain the propriety of open communion, would be to show that immersion is not essential to the performance of baptism; in other words, that something else besides immersion is valid baptism. Here the author of the letter and the Baptist are at issue. As this is the hinge on which the controversy turns, we trust an examination



of this point will not be deemed out of place.

In our subsequent remarks, we shall proceed upon the principles avowed by Dr. Griffin respecting the importance of baptism, and its connection with the due observance of the Lord's supper. Yet we shall not consider ourselves responsible for the sweeping conclusion, that "where there is no baptism there are no visible churches." As however, Dr. Griffin has given his explicit sanction to the propriety of this conclusion, we hope that hereafter, though it has sometimes been exhibited as an appalling result of the Baptists' peculiar sentiments, it will not be selected as an instance of unquestionable bigotry. For ourselves, we have never thought it necessary to draw such a conclusion. It has always appeared to us sufficient to say, that those communities of Christians who have abandoned the primitive practice in respect to baptism, are churches not in a state of order, so far as the positive ordinances of the gospel are concerned.

Before examining the opinion respecting baptism, on which the chief remarks in this letter are founded, we wish to correct an important error in one of its statements. This we do the more readily, because it is an error very extensively indulged, and yet one would think it a very obvious error. It is contained in these words: "The separating point is not about the subjects of baptism, but merely the mode. If we could be considered as fairly baptized, our Baptist brethren certainly would not exclude us merely because we apply the seal to infants." Now we ask, how is it possible that at this late day any one should need to be informed, that the separating point regards the subjects of baptism as well as the manner in which the ordinance is to be performed? It is frequently said, nothing separates Baptists from Pædobaptist but a little water. The impression produced by this remark on a hearer who has not paid special attention to the matter, is very unfavorable: and it cannot be wondered at, that the frequency of such remarks should have spread far and wide an opinion that members of Baptist churches are most unreasonable in their practice. Be it known then, that we have as much solicitude respecting the question, To whom may baptism be administered? as respecting the question, What is baptism? Should we make a distinction in regard to importance between the two questions, we should not hesitate to say that the former question far exceeds in importance the latter. Much as we are pained, that the outward performance of a Christian ordinance should be perverted and displaced, we are far more seriously concerned, that unconscious

babes should be considered suitable candidates for an ordinance in a dispensation in which each one is required to act for himself, and in which intelligence and moral goodness are requisite in order to perform its duties and to enjoy its privileges. We know it has been said, that baptism is not the act of the child, but of the parent in reference to the child. But where in the New Testament is the passage in which baptism is represented otherwise than as an act in which the individual baptized did for himself engage? Baptism is viewed by us as a most solemn act of worship; worship, not only in respect to the administrator, but especially and peculiarly in respect to the baptized person himself; a service, not of the parent or guardian, but of the baptized person himself. Indeed we cannot regard that as valid baptism, which is administered without a profession of faith in Christ, made by the candidate himself. To us it would be just as great a perversion for infants and professed unbelievers to partake of the Lord's supper, as it is for them to be (as it is said) baptized.

Those, then, are in a great mistake who represent their Baptist brethren as refusing to join with them in the Lord's supper on no other ground than simply because they have not been immersed. To substitute something else in the room of baptism, is a great and lamentable error; to admit individuals to a Christian ordinance who know not and who profess not to know what they do, is (to say the least) an equally great and lamentable error. Something more, then, than a little water divides these two denominations. We separate from Pædobaptist Christians because by their using a little water instead of "much water," they have divested baptism of a great part of its meaning; because by applying what they call a Christian ordinance to unbelieving and unknowing persons, they have still further departed from the meaning of baptism, and have lamentably obscured the spirituality of the gospel, and have created an imaginary relation between certain unsanctified persons and God; and because these errors produce sad misconceptions respecting the nature of the church. That must, then, be a very superficial view, which sees only a little water between these two portions of Christians. Let it not be said, baptism is merely an outward ceremony, and our opinions respecting it cannot be so very important. True, the performance of baptism is outward; but in order that baptism be properly and acceptably performed, there must be previously in him who receives it, a great moral change, which will ultimately pervade the whole character, and prepare the person for dwelling in the blessed regions of holiness. Unimportant as

baptism may appear to some, we cannot resist the conviction that the Head of the church wisely appointed it, as also the other ordinance to be a mark of distinction between the church and the world: and that, outward though the ordinance be, yet correct opinions respecting it are of most salutary tendency in regard to the purity of Christian faith and practice; and that if the ordinance of baptism had not been perverted from apostolic simplicity, a very large portion of the errors which have most permanently afflicted the church would have been avoided.

We must also correct another erroneous statement, intimately connected with that on which we have just been remarking. Dr. Griffin says, "The only question is, whether baptism by sprinkling is valid baptism." Here is an entire overlooking of qualifications for receiving baptism, the profession of which in the person baptized is essential to the due administration of the ordinance. We wonder not that the practice of sprinkling infants, and by this way either introducing them into covenant with God, or reminding the parent of his obligations to train up his child for God, or reminding him of the depraved nature of his child, and of its need of regeneration, should have removed from the minds of Pædobaptists a regard for qualifications connected with the reception of baptism. But when they are arguing upon a question which must be settled by a reference to baptism, they ought not leave out of view what Baptists conceive to be of essential importance in baptism; namely, the profession of personal faith in the Saviour. There are two questions, then, which should be asked: whether sprinkling without a profession of faith in the Saviour, made by the person sprinkled, is valid baptism; and, whether sprinkling, though accompanied with such a profession, is valid baptism. When a believer receives sprinkling, on the ground of its being baptism, there is a very serious opposition to our views of scriptural truth; when an infant, or any unbelieving person receives sprinkling on the faith, as is sometimes said, of the parent, or some other ancestor, or the guardian or of the church, there is a still wider departure from what we deem to be the representations of scripture. Now since the opinions respecting baptism are the foundation of the difficulty respecting the Lord's supper, we claim that the whole ground of dissent in regard to baptism should be kept in view.

We have made these distinct explanations in this place, so that if, in the progress of the discussion, our remarks should be restricted to a part of the controversy respecting baptism, we yet may not be misunderstood.

Dr. Griffin attempts to prove that immersion is not essential to the performance of baptism. "In the nature of things," says he in his first reason, "the validity of the ordinance cannot depend on the quantity of water, for the end is essentially answered by less as well as by more." The correctness of this assertion depends solely on the answer to the question, What is the end or design of baptism? A question, we hesitate not to say, the most important in regard to baptism; decisive of every point in controversy, whether respect be had to the manner in which the ordinance is to be performed, or to the subjects to whom it should be administered. Settle this point and there will be no further occasion for dispute respecting baptism. Would every minister of Christ, in simplicity and godly sincerity, search the scriptures, in order to discover what is the design of this ordinance, or what purpose it is intended to answer; and would he follow into all its necessary consequences the result of this investigation, there would soon be but one mind and one judgment among the stewards of the mysteries of God. Would every person about to make a public profession of religion, examine what the scriptures say on this point unbiassed by any extraneous considerations; and then, with unwavering confidence in God, act in accordance with the scriptural design of baptism, what vast diminution would there be of that mental disquietude which so many experience at that tender and interesting period—and which even ministers of the Lord Jesus sometimes endeavor to remove by the unwarrantable representations that such a time is not suitable for examining the subject; that, after having made a profession of religion, it can better be investigated; that baptism is non-essential; that it is a mere form of a ceremony; that one way is as good as another. Our hearts sicken when we think how even good men prevent disciples of the Lord from ascertaining and obeying his will; when we are compelled to think that some who are appointed to be lights in the church, do really envelope in darkness the tender mind of a young convert who wishes to inquire, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

It is our honest conviction that there are in the Bible statements in regard to baptism sufficiently explicit to show what this service means. So plainly does the Bible seem to us to speak on this point, that we think no emendation necessary to make it speak more plainly. The author of this letter declares what he conceives to be the end of baptism. "It is," he says, "only an emblem; an emblem, which, voluntarily used, is a profession of faith in a purifying Saviour. This language needs no com-



ment: baptism is "an emblem of purification;" and he who voluntarily uses it expresses his "faith in a purifying Saviour." From this representation of an uninspired man, we turn to the oracles of God, "to the law and to the testimony;" for if men, however venerable through age, or learning, or dignity of manners and station, or piety, "speak not according to this word," we hold ourselves bound to desert their guidance.

When we first meet with baptism as performed under the authority of our Lord, mentioned in the gospel by John iv. 1, 2, and then go forward to the solemn period when he extended the commission and said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;" that is, baptizing them into the worship and service of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, the first thought that enters our mind is, that baptism was intended to separate from all others and to collect into one body, all the truly pious. But while this general purpose was answered and was conspicuous even from the commencement, there were some particular ends to be accomplished, for which baptism had a peculiar significance. Water being a purifying element, and bathing for cleanliness as well as for comfort being customary, Jesus also having come to save his people from their sins, how appropriate is baptism to express the idea of cleansing, of moral purification! In conformity with this design was the address of Ananias to Saul of Tarsus, when this persecutor of the church had become a disciple of the Lord Jesus: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." To the same purpose, in immediate connection with "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," by Christian circumcision, that is, by the renovation of the heart, the Colossians (ii. 11, 12,) are represented as having been "buried in baptism."

Is there any additional significance in this rite? In the acts of the Apostles, viii. 37, 38, occurs the account of the Ethiopian officer baptized by Philip. As a necessary antecedent to his receiving of baptism, the eunuch made the following profession. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. During the conversation between Philip and this man, a minute account appears to have been given of the character, the sufferings, and the consequent glory of the Lord. He was induced to believe in Jesus as the Son of God. A reference to Rom. x. 9, will lead us to think that in this profession there was included the belief of a specially important event: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the

Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." In the act, then, of confessing the Lord Jesus, there is also implied a belief in his resurrection from the dead, and in his previous death and burial. That this object was always viewed by the primitive Christians in close connection with baptism, we have the fullest evidence from Rom. vi. 3. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ," or as his disciples, "were baptized into his death," or did by our baptism acknowledge his death as declared in the gospel? And that with this acknowledgment of the Saviour's death, there was also in baptism an acknowledgment of our duty to be dead to sin and to lead a new life, is evident from the succeeding verse. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

In writing to the Colossians also, the apostle very distinctly brings to view this striking significance of baptism: ii. 12. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein (in which emblem) also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God (or through faith in the power of God) who hath raised him from the dead."

In 1 Peter iii. 21. The same connection between baptism and the resurrection of our Lord is exhibited. In the ark of Noah, "eight souls were saved by water, the like figure whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God," that is, the profession of a conscience made tranquil towards God, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

With this view of the design of Christian baptism, how accordant is the remark of the apostle in the epistle to the Galatians, iii. 27. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ," that is, as his disciples, "have put on Christ, that is, have entered into a very intimate union with Christ; a union in regard to the relation towards God as his children. How is this union represented? Not merely by performing a ceremony, but by performing the appointed ceremony which symbolically represents him as having undergone a death on account of sin, and yourselves as having undergone a death unto sin; a ceremony which reminds you of him as rising to a state of triumph and glory, and represents yourselves as rising to a spiritual and divine life.

Look now at the end of baptism, and say whether it is answered by less water as well as more. One can hardly help exclaiming, How meagre is the account of

baptism in this letter! How materially does our Christian brethren divest this ordinance of its significance! How different are the considerations which they associate with baptism, from those with which the apostles cheered and incited the early believers whenever this ordinance supplied them with topics of remark!

And we cannot help adding, how much ought Baptists to feel themselves peculiarly bound to cherish a mortified temper; to live not to themselves but to him who died for them, and into whose death they have been baptized; to him who rose again, and in conformity to whose death they have by a most significant rite acknowledged their obligation to walk in newness of life!

Baptism is more than a profession of faith in a purifying Saviour. It is also a profession of faith in a Saviour dying, buried, rising from the dead. Can the death, the burial, the resurrection of the Saviour be represented by less water as well as by more? What person when he sees a wet hand applied to a child's, or an adult's forehead, or a few drops of water scattered on his face, is by this act reminded of a dying and a rising Saviour, and of the individuals death to sin, and resurrection to spiritual life? So entirely destitute of such significance is sprinkling, that we wonder not at the acknowledgments which candid Pædobaptists make, and at the difficulty which others feel in reference to the above quoted passages from the epistle to the Romans, and from that to the Colossians.

Since a mistake lies at the foundation of the argument we have been considering, the argument manifestly is of no force. The end of baptism cannot be answered, unless there be an immersion of the believer; hence immersion is essential to the validity of the ordinance. And hence we cannot regard as baptized, those who have not been immersed; and not regarding them as baptized, Dr. Griffin's own avowed principles will not permit us to unite with them at the Lord's table, even though we esteem them as Christians.

From this account of our opinion respecting baptism, it is manifest that it is viewed in very different lights by Baptists and by Pædobaptists. In our view, it sustains an intimate connection with those events on which are suspended our dearest hopes, as candidates for immortality. So that when we think of the Lord Jesus as delivered for our offences and as raised again for our justification, our thoughts naturally recur to the time when we were buried in baptism, when we voluntarily submitted to an act which publicly marked us as dead to sin, and which publicly sealed our avowal of obligation and our declaration of serious purpose to lead a holy life. And O, what

a reproof is a remembrance of that hour adapted to convey to our hearts! Meditation on our having been baptized, suggests to our minds the fact that we have been buried with Christ by baptism into death, and the obligation that "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Connecting baptism thus with the history of Christ, and with our obligations to be conformed to him, it cannot be surprising that we are always willing to converse respecting it, and that we desire all Christians to participate in correct views of it.

We mean not to intimate that those whose opinions differ from ours respecting this ordinance, connect with it no practical considerations. But many of the considerations which they connect with it are such as the apostles did not present in connection with baptism; and a part of those which the apostles did connect with it they omit. When we think of this fact, we wonder not at the long continued controversy; for the reasonings on the opposite sides proceed from materially different views, almost as if they had respect to disconnected subjects. The *design of Baptism* should be the point in controversy.

This design, in our opinion, is not the same as it is represented by Pædobaptists. How can the writer of this letter expect, then, that we should act according to the consequence which he draws from *his* opinion of the design? Let us all, in the first place, acknowledge the truth as to the scriptural design of baptism, and we venture to promise that he and we will go hand in hand in observing all things which the Lord has commanded his disciples.

We would remark in passing, that the *Design of Baptism* has been so amply discussed in the sermon preached, Sept. 1828, by Professor Chase, before the Boston Association, and which has recently appeared in a third edition, that it seems to us unnecessary to enter more fully upon this subject. To that sermon we respectfully invite the attention of all who seriously wish to ascertain the truth.

The principle implied in the second reason of this letter, however true in general, is not appropriate to the matter in hand. For although "an emblem of purification applied to a part of the body is as effectual as if applied to the whole body," it by no means follows that the application of a few drops of water to a part of the body is valid baptism; because, however such an application might be an emblem of purification, it cannot be an emblem of the other things which enter into the design of baptism, and consequently it cannot answer the end of baptism. To Dr. Griffin's use of the



passage of scripture introduced in this connection, John xiii. 1—10, we have two objections to make. First, It was no part of our Saviour's design to communicate, in that passage, instruction respecting baptism. Secondly, In order to defend Dr. Griffin's explanation, there must be conceived to be in our Lord's remark to Peter, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet," a strange mixing of figurative and of literal language; as, He that is washed (that is, he that has experienced an inward cleansing) needeth not save to wash his feet (that is, literally to wash a part of his body.)

Let the passage speak for itself. As one of the closing acts of our Saviour's life, he wished in a striking manner to correct the disposition which his disciples had manifested in the question, Who shall be greatest? Accordingly, he prepared to wash their feet, a service which his disciples, from the customs of the country, had associated with the most menial situation. Peter could not endure the thought that he to whom he had always looked up with reverence, as altogether his superior; he who stood in the exalted dignity of the Messiah, should perform for him the most menial part of a servant's duty. The Saviour endeavored to gain the consent of Peter by assuring him that though he did not then perceive what was intended by this transaction, yet when it had been performed, it should be explained to him. Peter still declined. Our Lord then solemnly assured him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Peter either from overflowing affection, or from not entering into the spiritual import of the Saviour's declaration, exclaimed, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Our Lord then informed him that for the special object which he had in view, it was not necessary to receive a general washing of the body. Just as a person who has recently been bathed,\* needs only to have his feet washed, which may have contracted defilement by walking in the dust; so the disciples, having already received a general cleansing, needed only carefully to preserve themselves from the defilements to which they were exposed. To speak without metaphor, the disciples had already experienced the general renewing of their hearts. This they ought not to expect again; but their attention should be directed to the

avoiding of sin, and to the cultivating of those dispositions which characterize the disciples of the Messiah. The particular trait, then inculcated, was humility; humility, so unfeigned and pervading, as to induce them to perform for each other, even the lowest and most troublesome services; which would lead them instead, of inquiring among themselves, Who shall be greatest? rather to inquire, Who shall be the least of all and the servant of all?

Thus our Lord's design was not to give instruction respecting baptism; nor is there in this passage any thing in the slightest degree at variance with the conclusion to which we arrive by examining the import of baptism.

In the third statement of this letter there is certainly much truth: "If the exact form of baptism were essential to its validity, the form would have been so clearly defined, that no honest mind could mistake it." If certain ends are to be answered by an ordinance, and those ends are connected with a certain outward representation, then it is necessary that the outward form be clearly defined; else such a form may come into use as may entirely obscure the ends which the ordinance was intended to answer. If outward forms are appointed as emblems, they ought to be significant; there ought to be a manifest correspondence between the emblem and the thing signified; and the more spiritual the dispensation, the more simple and the more easily understood the emblem. Some men speak of forms and ceremonies, as being of little account in respect to the manner of performance and as being subject to modifications, according to the various circumstances and opinions of men. A scrupulous adherence to particular forms they also represent as contrary to the scriptural nature of Christianity, and as arguing a grossness of conception in respect to the divine requisitions. But in such remarks there is more appearance than reality of spiritual elevation. If the Head of the church has appointed certain forms, it does not argue a commendable spirituality of feeling, that a man conceives himself at liberty to slight those forms. If those ceremonies, by the manner of their performance, are adapted and intended to answer certain ends, does elevation above the grossness of sense, furnish an adequate excuse for essentially varying the manner and connecting with it some other lesson, or for receiving the intended lesson in some other than the more obvious way, or for refusing to draw any instruction from a matter subjected to the outward man? We show the truest regard for God by implicitly complying with his injunctions, and by impressing our hearts with just such

\*Though in our translation the same term *wash* occurs twice in the tenth verse, yet in the original, two very distinct words are used; one of which rendered "he that is washed," refers appropriately to a bathing of the whole body, while the other, rendered "to wash," refers to a partial washing, as that of the hands, or face, or feet. So that the tenth verse would have been more correctly translated, "He that has been bathed needeth not save to wash his feet," &c.

lessons and in just such a manner as he has appointed. After all that may be said about Christianity being a spiritual dispensation, and its raising the mind above mere forms, it becomes us to remember that men are still only men; and God has most wisely consulted for the moral improvement of men by the few simple outward forms, as well as by the pure precepts, and the glorious prospects of Christianity.

Why, then, do honest minds mistake? Plainly, because they are not infallible; and because they may be under a vast variety of influences which hinder the reception of the truth. Are there no other subjects, plain to a mind unbiassed, yet viewed in a mistaken manner by minds honest on every other subject? But suppose any refuse to examine for themselves; suppose they either fear to examine, or hastily think themselves incompetent to form an opinion; will they receive the knowledge of the truth? Suppose any examine under the influence of prejudice from various quarters; suppose they go not to the proper source of information; is it surprising that they come not to a true result? We forbear here to press the fact, that almost every person, who in a peculiarly conscientious frame of mind reads what the scriptures declare concerning baptism, becomes shaken in regard to the sprinkling of infants and others; and that scruples on this subject are often removed by turning away from the bible, or by thinking that a person's usefulness at the present day forbids him to be a Baptist. And not a few, there is reason to believe, set their minds at rest by the persuasion that the inconveniences attending the adoption of Baptist sentiments are so great, that they trust the Lord will pardon them in this one thing.

Since the form of this ordinance is thus necessary, we might expect it to be clearly defined. Dr. Griffin's fourth reason denies that it is thus defined. To this point, then, we now turn our attention.

There are two inquiries which may embrace all that needs to be said on this point. 1st. Is there any thing in the circumstances in which this ordinance, during the time of Christ and of his apostles, was administered, that required divers modes of administration? 2d. Is there any peculiar obscurity in the language which speaks of this ordinance, by which it is prevented from having an equally definite meaning with other language, or by which we are unable to ascertain that meaning? These questions have so often been lucidly and satisfactorily answered in the negative, that we deem it superfluous on the present occasion to institute a new examination of them. Those who desire to pursue the investigation, are referred to the works on baptism, which have been published during the pres-

ent year, and especially to the letters of Dr. Chapin, published in the year 1820. These letters, we question whether Dr. Griffin has ever read; else he could not expect to change the opinion of Baptists by statements that have long since been anticipated and met in a fair manly way.

But leaving this topic, it has been to us a matter of surprise, that Dr. Griffin should write in so unguarded a manner. He insinuates that the three thousand believers on the day of Pentecost, (See Acts of the Apostles, Chap. ii.) were baptized by eleven men. Observe the unfairness of this insinuation. In the first chapter, containing an account of what was transacted previously to the day of Pentecost, we are informed that the place of Judas was supplied by the election of Matthias, so that Matthias "was numbered with the eleven apostles." During the lifetime, also of our Lord, seventy disciples were appointed as his public ministers; two important facts entirely overlooked. Dr. Griffin intimates that the local situation of Jerusalem "on the top of a high hill," forbids the supposition of there being sufficient water. Really, one would think this letter was written for the benefit of very ignorant people. We take the liberty to refer its author to the statement of a certain Jewish writer, who probably knew more about Jerusalem than any President of a college in the United States. He says, "*The mountains are around about Jerusalem.*" See Psalm cxxv. 2. Jerusalem was indeed built upon hills; but there were other hills around, and especially did Mount Olivet tower above the holy city. Is a hilly country necessarily poorly supplied with water? Who does not know that on elevated spots springs may be found, when equally elevated places are contiguous, and especially in the neighborhood of still higher places? Dr. Griffin adds, "far from any river or brook deep enough for immersion." But must there necessarily have been a river or a brook? From the insinuations which are sometimes thrown out, one would think Jerusalem must have been utterly unfit to be the metropolis of a flourishing country; a country too whose prescribed religion required the constant use of water for purifications and ablutions, and all whose male inhabitants were required to assemble there three times every year. We have been told that not many years since, the Jordan was represented as only an insignificant streamlet, not sufficiently deep for immersing a man. But when knowledge had increased so much that even Baptists could detect the error, this representation fell into disuse. Who has ever proved that Jerusalem was sadly destitute of water? Does the well known fact of its having been a very populous city prove it? Does the fact that the Jews from



regard to religion and to cleanliness, made frequent use of bathing prove it? Does the molten sea furnished by Solomon for the service of the temple, and which could hold about seven hundred barrels; and do the ten other lavers, each of which held between nine and ten barrels, prove it? And what shall we say of the fountain of Siloam which, according to Josephus, had "water in it—in great plenty?"\* and of the pool at the sheep gate, with its five porticoes?

Of what avail, then, is the startling supposition respecting the two men brought up in the centre of the earth? Who could wonder if men brought up in the inside of the earth should commit some very gross mistakes on various matters that would be perfectly clear to common men, who had been brought up on the surface? Instead of making such a supposition, we would rather ask what have been the opinions of men of learning, of confessed impartiality, of ability to investigate the subject, and of sufficient candor to state explicitly the result of their investigations, though that result should contradict their previous opinions, and even their continued practice? To a few testimonies of this kind, exhibiting the candid convictions of their authors, respecting the manner in which the ordinance was originally administered, we will now attend.

Dr. Campbell, Principal of the Marischal College, at Aberdeen, Scotland, a minister of the Presbyterian church, whom few have equalled in the variety and extent, and accuracy of his literary and theological investigations, has expressed himself in the following manner.

"The word *περιτομή* (*peritome*) the Latins have translated *circumcisio* (circumcision), which exactly corresponds in etymology; but the word *βαπτισμα* (*baptisma*) they have retained, changing only the letters from Greek to Roman. Yet the latter was just as susceptible of a literal version into Latin as the former. *Immersio*, (immersion,) answers as exactly in the one case as *circumcisio* (circumcision) in the other. . . . We have deserted the Greek names where the Latins have deserted them, and have adopted them where the Latins have. Hence we say *circumcision*, and not *peritomy*; and we do not say *immersion*, but *baptism*. Yet when the language furnishes us with materials for a version so exact and analogical, such a version conveys the sense more perspicuously than a foreign name. For this reason, I should think the word immersion a better English name than baptism, were we now at liberty to make a choice."<sup>†</sup>

In the same author's notes upon the Gospel by Matthew, occur the following statements. Chapter iii. verse 11, "*In water—in the Holy Spirit*, *ἐν ὕδατι—ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι*. English translation, *with water—with the Holy Ghost*. Vulgate, *in aqua—in Spiritu Sancto*. Thus also the Syriac and other ancient versions. I am sorry to observe that the Popish translators from the Vulgate, have shown greater veneration for the style of that version, than the generality of Protestant translators have shown for that of the original. For in this the Latin is not more explicit than the Greek. Yet so inconsistent are the interpreters last mentioned, that none of them have scrupled to render *ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ*, in the sixth verse, *in Jordan*, though nothing can be plainer than that if there be any incongruity in the expression *in water*, this *in Jordan* must be equally incongruous. But they have seen that the preposition *in* could not be avoided there, without adopting a circumlocution, and saying *with the water of Jordan*, which would have made the deviation from the text too glaring. The word *βαπτίζω* (rendered *to baptize*,) 'both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies, *to dip, to plunge, to immerse*, and was rendered by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin fathers, *tingere*, the term used for dyeing cloth, which was by immersion. It is always construed suitably to this meaning. Thus it is, *ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ*. But I should not lay much stress on the preposition *ἐν*, which, answering to the Hebrew *ב* may denote *with* as well as *in*, did not the whole phraseology, in regard to this ceremony, concur in evincing the same thing. Accordingly, the baptized are said *ἀναβαίνειν, to arise, emerge, or ascend*, v. 16 *ἀπο τοῦ ὕδατος*, and Acts viii. 39, *ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος, from or out of the water*. Let it be observed further, that the verbs *βαπτίζω* and *παντίζω*, used in scripture for *sprinkling*, are never construed in this manner. When therefore, the Greek word *βαπτίζω* (rendered *I baptize*,) 'is adopted, I may say, rather than translated into modern languages, the mode of construction ought to be preserved, so far as may conduce to suggest its original import. It is to be regretted that we have so much evidence that even good and learned men allow their judgments to be warped by the sentiments and customs of the sect which they prefer. The true partizan, of whatever denomination, always inclines to correct the diction of the spirit, by that of the party."

The following extract is from another work of the same author. "Another error in disputation, which is by far too common, is when one will admit nothing in the plea or arguments of an adversary to be of the smallest weight. In have heard a dispu-

\* Jewish War; Book v. Chapter iv. § 1.

† Preliminary Dissertations; VIII. Part II. § 2.

tant of this stamp, in defiance of etymology and use, maintain that the word rendered in the New Testament *baptize*, means more properly to sprinkle than to plunge; and in defiance of all antiquity, that the former method was the earliest, and for many centuries, the most general practice in baptizing. One who argues in this manner, never fails, with persons of knowledge, to betray the cause he would defend; and though with respect to the vulgar, bold assertions generally succeed, as well as arguments, sometimes better, yet a candid mind will disdain to take the help of a falsehood, even in support of the truth.\*

We now present an extract from Storr's Biblical Theology, published at Andover, 1826; merely premising that Storr was an eminent theologian in the Lutheran church. "The disciples of our Lord could understand his command in no other manner, than as enjoining immersion; for the Baptism of John, to which Jesus himself submitted, and also the earlier baptism (John iv. 1.) of the disciples of Jesus, were performed by dipping the subject into cold water; as is evident from the following passages. Matt. iii. 6, βαπτίζοντο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ were baptized in Jordan. v 16. Ἰησοῦς ἀνέβη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος Jesus ascended out of the water. John iii. 23. ὅτι ὕδατα πολλὰ ἦν ἐκεῖ because there was much water there.

"And that they actually did understand it so, is proved, partly by those passages in the New Testament, which evidently allude to immersion. Acts viii. 36, &c. ὅτε ἀνέβησαν ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος when they had come up out of the water. v. 39. xvi. 12—15, παραποταμὸν at the river. Rom. vi. 4, συνεταφίμεν (τῷ Χριστῷ) διὰ τὸν βαπτισμῶς, ὡς ὡς περ ἠγερθεὶς Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν are buried with him, (Christ) by baptism, so that as Christ was raised from the dead, &c. Compare Col. ii. 12, and 1 Peter iii. 21, where baptism is termed the *antitype* (ἀντίτυπον) of the flood. And partly, from the fact, that immersion was so customary in the ancient church, that even in the third century, the baptism of the sick, who were merely sprinkled with water, was entirely neglected by some, and by others was thought inferior to the baptism of those who were in health, and who received baptism not merely by aspersion, but who actually bathed themselves in water. This is evident from Cyprian (Epist. 69. edition Breme, page 185, &c.) and Eusebius, (His. Eccles. l. vi. cap. 43,) where we find the following extract from the letter of the Roman Bishop Cornelius: 'Novatus received baptism on a sick bed, by aspersion, (περιχύθεις) if it can be said

that such a person received baptism.' 'No person who had, during sickness, been baptized by aspersion, was admitted into the clerical office.' Moreover, the old custom of immersion was also retained a long time in the western church, at least in the case of those who were not indisposed. And, even after aspersion had been fully introduced in a part of the western churches, there yet remained several, who for some time adhered to the ancient custom. Under these circumstances, it is certainly to be lamented, that Luther was not able to accomplish his wish with regard to the introduction of immersion in baptism, as he had done in the restoration of wine in the Eucharist." pp. 290, 291. A few lines after, speaking of the change of the ancient custom of immersion, he says, "It ought not to have been made."\*

Storr mentions the wish of Luther respecting the use of immersion. In the appendix to Professor Chase's sermon, is an extract from the works of Luther, in which that eminent reformer very explicitly states his conviction in regard to baptism.

Passing by the concessions which might be drawn from the commentaries of Macknight, and Rosenmueller, and others we invite attention to two or three sentences from the *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus* of Suicer; a work in two folio volumes, exhibiting a digest of the voluminous theological writings of the Greek Fathers.

"The *going under* and then *rising* in baptism was used, that thus the burial and the resurrection of Christ might be shadowed forth. This is the ancient writers teach."†

"This *going under*, and then *rising* was in use in the first centuries which immediately succeeded the apostolic age. This is plain from those testimonies of the Fathers which with sufficient copiousness have already been adduced."‡

These declarations are abundantly sustained by appropriate extracts from the

\* The preceding extract is from an English translation of a work in German; which German work is a translation from the Latin of Storr's Christian Doctrine, accompanied with notes and illustrations, by Professor Platt. It is worthy of being known, that the translator into English has employed certain terms in this connection, which are not warranted by the real opinions of Storr. We refer to the "caption, or summary view of contents" prefixed to the illustration from which the extract is taken. By referring to the work, our readers may see that the following sentence introduces this illustration; "*The primitive mode was probably by immersion.*" This qualified remark, so poorly adapted to the illustration which introduces, did not proceed from Storr, but from the translator into English. With Storr the truth of what he asserts was not a matter of mere probability, but of moral certainty. The following expression deserves also to be specified: "who actually bathed themselves in water." The words which Storr uses are, when correctly translated *were bathed*. The use of the word *themselves*, intimating by its connection, that the baptized performed the operation themselves, like the Jewish proselytes, did not originate with Storr.

† Vol. I. p. 260. Art. ἀνάβω. ‡ p. 261.

\* Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, pp. 294, 295.



Fathers, as any one may see by consulting the work.

See also the result to which this learned author was led in regard to the subjects of baptism in the primitive ages, by his lengthened and laborious investigation of the early Christian writers.

"In the first two centuries, no one received baptism, unless being instructed in the faith, and imbued with the doctrine of Christ, he could testify that he was a believer—on account of these words, *He that believeth and is baptized*. Therefore to believe preceded. Thence arose in the church the order of Catechumens. It was also then the constant custom, that the Eucharist should be given to those Catechumens immediately after baptism. Afterwards the opinion prevailed, that no one could be saved unless he had been baptized. But because formerly the Eucharist was given to adult Catechumens as soon as they had been bathed in sacred baptism, this also was appointed to be done in the case of infants, after Pædobaptism was introduced.\*"

Such were the sentiments of this learned man; sentiments which resulted from twenty years' indefatigable researching among the writings of the early Christian Fathers.†

Had there then, been no departure from primitive practice, immersion would have been universal. But can this departure from the originally established form be justified? Yes, say some men; "because the change of the ancient custom of immersion, although it ought not to have been made, destroys nothing that is essential to this ceremony as it was instituted by our Saviour." But surely it is essential to this ceremony that it be the significant action ordained by our Lord. The change which human contrivance has introduced may answer some of the purposes intended, yet in other respects it destroys the significance of the ordinance. Immersion expresses the whole, but any substitute necessarily omits a part of what was intended to be expressed. Shall we, then, make void any part of God's command through a confessedly human contrivance?

Dr. Griffin's fifth remark, that "if nothing but immersion is baptism, there is no visible church except among the Baptists," is a conclusion of his own forming, for which we have already disclaimed all responsibility. The fact, however, that God pours out his Spirit upon Pædobaptists in

their assemblies, and "at the table of the Lord," that they "spread around them the savor of the Redeemer's name by their holy examples and evangelical efforts," and that they "are a great majority of the chosen instruments to carry the gospel to the heathen," can be explained otherwise than by referring it to the divine acknowledgment of their being churches. The error which our Pædobaptist brethren cherish, though producing injurious effects, cannot prevent all the consequences which appropriately flow from the many precious truths which they maintain. When their ministers preach repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, clearly and forcibly, God will bless his truth. When they devote their wealth and their exertions to the spread of the gospel, God will bless their efforts, notwithstanding the error with which they have enveloped a part of divine truth. But it becomes them to consider whether, if they should receive the whole truth of God, and open their hearts to its whole influence, a still greater blessing would not rest upon them, both at home and abroad; and whether they would not be happily freed from many perplexing and hurtful circumstances. It is our belief, that if, with all their present advantages for growing in piety, and for usefulness, they also should abandon error respecting baptism, and come under the influence of the whole truth as it is in Jesus, the result would be inconceivably happy.

What occurs under the sixth head is so similar to what immediately precedes, that we deem it unnecessary to make any additional explanations. We will only ask, whether, supposing it to be true, that Pædobaptist "preachers are not church members, and therefore have no right to preach, and certainly are not ministers of Christ, and therefore have no right to administer the Lord's supper, and are guilty of awful profanity in doing this," whether, even supposing all this to be indubitably true, Dr. Griffin seriously believes that God would drive them from the earth like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? Men sometimes speak boldly, rather than soberly. What if we should hear of a profane company of young men meeting, during a revival of religion, for the express purpose of celebrating in mockery the ordinance of the Lord's supper; and it should be told us that He who is long suffering and abundant in mercy, did not cause the earth to open and to swallow up the offenders; but that on the contrary, so marvellous are the ways of God, there was fastened on the conscience of one, such a conviction of guilt that he found no peace till he applied to that Saviour with whose sufferings he

\* Vol. II. p. 1131. Art. Συναγωγῆς, IV. b.

† It will be gratifying to many of our readers to know that, by the munificence of a generous friend, an extensive collection of the early Greek and Latin Fathers, selected with care in Europe, has recently been added to the library of the Newton Theological Institution.

had been sporting: Would this exceed the bounds of belief? The dispensation under which we are permitted to live does not require those immediate, outward manifestations of divine displeasure which were appropriate to a former age.

The remarks under the seventh head and under the eighth, imply that the refusing to mingle ourselves with our Pædobaptist brethren in celebrating the Lord's supper, is a violation of the spirit of Christian love and union; and arises from bigotry and selfishness. Thus we come back to the hackneyed common-place in which many people indulge themselves. And is it Dr. Griffin that is treading upon this beaten ground? a man who seems to perceive on what principle the Baptists withhold from uniting with others at the Lord's table, and who assents to the correctness of the principle; a man who has been understood to vindicate Baptists from the charge of illiberality, and who has been understood to say that if his sentiments on baptism corresponded with those of the Baptists he would practise as they do in regard to communion? Henceforth we will not wonder when the unreflecting multitude thus accuse us. We will leave our cause with God, and earnestly implore that we and all our Christian brethren may be more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the Lord Jesus; that the strife of tongues may cease; that whether we or they, are in fault, error may be exposed, and that under the mild influences of truth, the church of the Lord may flourish.

Our hearts were pained by the unkind remarks under these heads. Let any Christian solemnly reflect on the endearing relation which subsists among the children of God, the expectants of heavenly bliss; let him warm his heart by meditating on the love of Jesus Christ, and by communing with his Lord and Master, and we persuade ourselves he will regret that such a train of thought should have been expressed, when the conscientious, self-denying practice of acknowledged brethren in Christ was the subject. We judge not the author of these remarks. We believe the recollection of his having made them and of his having permitted them to be published, must excite some painful emotions. There is, too, so manifest a difference between the casting of such reflections, and the manner in which the letter commences, that one might be excused for doubting whether both parts came from the same pen. But so it is. And we are compelled to place this among the proofs, that age and experience, dignity and piety, may swerve from Christian kindness and rectitude; may be mingled with human imperfections, and may still have occasion

in brokenness of heart to seek forgiveness from a Saviour who can abundantly pardon.

We refuse not to associate at the Lord's table with other Christians because we are bigoted, or selfish, or because we wish "to shut our adherents in by a sort of impassable gulf." The practice for which we are censured is not recommended to us except by a regard to what we think the will of our Lord. Nor is the practice at all inconsistent with the purest and most generous Christian love. For we can love our brethren with pure hearts fervently, while yet we do not join with them in every religious observance. There are occasions, and those of perpetual occurrence, on which the expressions of Christian affection are less questionably genuine, than the occasion afforded by celebrating the Lord's supper. Our practice does not imply want of love for the disciples of our Lord; it implies conscientious adherence to principles which we think our Lord has established in his church. Nor is our practice at all inconsistent with the fact, that all true Christians will commune together in heaven; for the communion of soul which the redeemed will enjoy in heaven is a different thing from celebrating the Lord's supper.

The names of the "celebrated Robert Hall, and of the late excellent Dr. Stillman" are indeed dear; but we remember that our Lord has cautioned his disciples to call no man master upon earth. It may be well also, to mention, that however applauded Mr. Hall's liberality may be, it proceeds "entirely on the ground that baptism is not an indispensable prerequisite to communion;" a principle, the propriety of which in the commencement of this letter, Dr. Griffin expressly disowns. As to the "excellent Dr. Stillman," who is said to have stood "at the head of the liberal class" in America, we have reason to believe that the case is not quite so clear as one would suppose from Dr. Griffin's remark. But what if it were? Must we be governed by names? Our faith must not stand in the wisdom of men.\*

\* Since writing the above, the following letter has been received from a much esteemed and well known individual, for many years a deacon in the church of which Dr. Stillman was the pastor.

"Your note is just received, making inquiry respecting Dr. Stillman's sentiments on communion. The Doctor was a man of a most catholic spirit; and he always felt so ardent an attachment to, and such an intimate union with, all whom he believed to be real Christians, that I think had he consulted his feelings only, he would have avowed himself an open communionist. But from all that I ever heard him say on the subject, I believe he did not consider the practice correct.

"I have heard Dr. Baldwin say that when Dr. Stillman first came to Boston, his evangelical brethren in the ministry of the Pædobaptist denomination expected that he would commune with them, and that their opinion was grounded on some remarks made by Dr. Stillman, which were understood by them to be favorable to such



Some topics are named in this letter which do not materially affect the leading point; such as, the baptism administered by John, and the purpose for which our Saviour received baptism. We therefore omit the consideration of these topics, and refer those who wish to see a brief yet comprehensive view of them, to the sermon on *the design of baptism*, which has already been named.

Though so far as our present purpose is concerned, the topics just named may be waived, yet on the general question of baptism they ought by no means to be omitted. For the fact that baptism had been frequently administered by divine authority previously to the final commission of the apostles, is one of the circumstances which must be taken into account when we endeavor to view ourselves as in the same situation in which the apostles were when they received that commission. A recent advocate for sprinkling contends earnestly (but not more earnestly than he ought) that in order to know how the apostles would understand the language of the commission, we must as far as possible conceive ourselves to be in their situation at that time. Now applying this principle, we observe, that the disciples of our Lord previously to receiving their final commission had for several years been witnessing the administration of baptism by the divinely appointed harbinger of the Messiah, and had themselves administered baptism under their Lord's immediate direction. See John iv. 1, 2. That all these instances of baptism had a very direct reference to the Messiah's dispensation, we presume no one will question. Thus baptism, *administered by divine authority*, was to them, when the commission was last given, no new thing. Having been accustomed to baptism, how would they naturally proceed when they were commissioned to go into all the world to teach all nations, baptizing them? Clearly they would proceed in the manner to which they had been accustomed unless some special direction had been given to pursue a different course. Such a direction seems to have been given as to the form of words in connection with which the ordinance was to be administered; but neither from the

commission itself, nor from the subsequent history of the apostles is there the least satisfactory evidence, that they were authorized to depart from the original institution, either as to the action to be performed, or as to the persons on whom it was to be performed.

There is one other point to which we would direct the attention of our readers. Under the fourth head of this letter, occurs the following sentence: "There is a great variety in the manner of their [different denominations'] keeping the supper, administering baptism, performing prayer, and conducting all the forms of public worship." Thus the manner in which baptism is performed is put upon a level with the unprescribed circumstances attending the administration of the Lord's supper, the performance of prayer, and other forms of public worship. It has often been intimated, that it is quite as immaterial in what manner baptism be performed, as it is in what manner prayer be performed, whether in a standing or a kneeling posture; that it is quite as reasonable to hold a controversy on the question whether we must kneel or stand in prayer, as on the question, whether in baptism we must be immersed or not. Thus Baptists are represented as contending about a mere circumstance of a religious rite whereas it is their continual profession that they are contending about the rite itself. The illustration drawn from prayer and from the administration of the Lord's supper, is by no means appropriate. For whether prayer be performed by a person kneeling, sitting, standing, or, lying down, still it is prayer, as no particular manner is prescribed. Whether the Lord's supper be administered to persons sitting, or reclining according to the custom which prevailed in Palestine, still it is the Lord's supper; for we have no directions concerning posture, and there is nothing which is intended to be expressed by the Lord's supper, that is inconsistent with either posture. But in the other ordinance, the form is prescribed, just as really as it would appear to be, if the original word, instead of being *adopted* or *transferred* from Greek in to the English language, had been *translated*. It would then have been expressed, in plain English by the word *immersion*. Moreover, something essential to the ordinance, as to what it is intended to represent, is omitted, if any thing be substituted for immersion. So that our controversy is not respecting the form of baptism, but respecting baptism itself; not whether persons shall be baptized in this or in that way, but whether they shall be *baptized*. Pedobaptists say, any one of certain things in baptism; we say only one of those things is baptism. The controversy then is about the thing, not

communion. The Dr. however, found the brethren of his church and other Baptists unfavorable to the inter-course, and he gave it up; and my opinion is, that he did not consider it either expedient or correct. In fact having never suspected him, during his life, to favor open communion, I never asked him particularly as to his own views on the subject; and it was not till after his death when Dr. Ephraim Eliot's pamphlet was published, that I had the conversation referred to with Dr. Baldwin. I never knew him to communicate at the Lord's table with Pedobaptists, nor were any other than immersed professing believers ever admitted to communicate with his church during the fourteen years in which I delightedly sat under his affectionate ministry.

Very respectfully yours.

JAMES LORING.







Robert Wall

about a circumstance of the thing. The illustration drawn from prayer and from the Lord's supper would be opposite, if the matter in controversy were, whether the validity of baptism be affected by the circumstance of the candidate's standing or kneeling in the water, or by the circumstance of prayer's preceding or following his immersion. But plainly about mere circumstances we have no dispute; and it is not unjust and unkind to compare the manner of baptism to the posture in prayer, and at the Lord's table. We repeat it the controversy is about the thing itself. Baptists view themselves as contending for the very existence of a Christian ordinance; as contending, not whether baptism shall be administered in this or that way, but whether it shall be retained in the church.

The views of other denominations respecting baptism are not definite; with them immersion, pouring, sprinkling, are all equally valid baptism. With Baptists, immersion only is acknowledged as baptism. Other denominations then may without any peculiar generosity or kindness, invite us to

come to the Lord's table; for they admit that we are baptized. We, however, cannot invite and encourage them without violating our conscience, because we cannot consider them as baptized, i. e. *immersed*, according to the command of our Lord. There is then a manifest difference between the two cases; and since it is the Pædobaptists who have departed from the command, we confidently and solemnly ask, who are to be blamed for the want of union between them and us?

We pray that knowledge and holiness may increase. We call upon all the friends of Christ to search the scriptures. We affectionately entreat them to remember his words, *If ye love me, keep my commandments*; and thus to examine themselves, in respect to baptism, as well as in respect to other duties, whenever they think of the memorials of his death. And may all who keep the ordinances as they were originally delivered, become living proofs that their baptism is not an unmeaning ceremony, but a powerful incitement to walk in newness of life.

## A MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. ROBERT HALL, A. M.

By O. GREGORY, L. L. D. F. R. A. S.

ROBERT HALL, was born at Arnsby, a village about eight miles from Leicester, on the 2d of May, 1764. His father was descended from a respectable family of yeomanry in Northumberland, whence he removed to Arnsby in 1753, on being chosen the pastor of a Baptist congregation in that place. He was not a man of learning, but a man of correct judgment and solid piety, an eloquent and successful preacher of the gospel, and one the first among the modern Baptists in our villages who aimed to bring them down from the heights of ultra-Calvinism to those views of religious truth which are sound, devotional, and practical. He was

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the author of several useful publications, of which one, the "Help to Zion's Travellers," has gone through several editions, and is still much and beneficially read, on account of its tendency to remove various often-urged objections against some momentous points of evangelical truth. He was often appointed to draw up the "Circular Letters" from the ministers and messengers of the Northampton Association. One of these letters, published in 1776, presents, in small compass, so able a defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, that it might be advantageously republished for more general circulation. This excellent man died in March, 1791. His character has been beau-



tifully sketched by his son, who, in one sentence, while portraying his father, with equal accuracy depicted himself: "He appeared to the greatest advantage upon subjects where the faculties of most men fail them; for the natural element of his mind was greatness."

The wife of this valuable individual was a woman of sterling sense and distinguished piety. She died in December, 1776.

Robert was the youngest of fourteen children, six of whom survived their parents. Four of these were daughters, of whom three are still living; the other son, John, settled as a farmer at Arnsby, and died in 1806.

Robert, while an infant, was so delicate and feeble, that it was scarcely expected he would reach maturity. Until he was two years of age he could neither walk nor talk. He was carried about in the arms of a nurse, who was kept for him alone, and was directed to take him close after the plough in the field, and at other times to the sheep-pen, from a persuasion, very prevalent in the midland counties, that the exhalations from newly ploughed land, and from sheep in the fold are salubrious and stengthening. Adjacent to his father's dwelling-house was a burial ground; and the nurse, a woman of integrity and intelligence, judging from his actions that he was desirous to learn the meaning of the inscriptions on the grave-stones, and of the various figures carved upon them managed, by the aid of those inscriptions, to teach him the letters of the alphabet, then to group them into syllables and words, and thus, at length, to read and speak. No sooner was his tongue loosed by this unusual but efficient process, than his advance became constantly marked. Having acquired the ability to speak, his constitutional ardor at once appeared. He was incessantly asking questions, and became a great and a rapid talker. One day, when he was about three years old, on his expressing disapprobation of some person who spoke quickly, his mother reminded him that *he* spoke very fast; "No," said he, "*I only keep at it.*"

Like many others who were born in villages, he received his first regular instructions (after he left his nurse's arms) at a dame's school, Dame Seotton had the honor of being the first professional instructor. From her he was transferred to Mrs. Lyley, in the same village. While under their care he evinced an extraordinary thirst for knowledge, and became a collector of books. In the summer season, after the school-hours were over, he would put his richly prized library among which was an Entick's Dictionary, into his pinafore, steal into the grave-yard (which, from an early and fixed

association, he regarded as his study,) lie down upon the grass, spread his books around him, and there remain until the deepening shades of evening compelled him to retire into the house.

At about six years of age he was placed, as a day-scholar, under the charge of a Mr. Simmons, of Wigston, a village about four miles from Arnsby. At first, he walked to school in the mornings, and home again in the evenings. But the severe pain in his back from which he suffered so much through life, had even then begun to distress him; so that he was often obliged to lie down upon the road, and sometimes his brother John and his other school-fellows carried him, in turn, he repaying them during their labor by relating some amusing story, or detailing some of the interesting results of his reading. On his father's ascertaining his inability to walk so far daily, he took lodgings for him and his brother at the house of a friend in the village: after this arrangement was made, they went to Wigston on the Monday mornings, and returned to Arnsby on the Saturday afternoons.

The course of instructions at Mr. Simmons's school was not very extensive; and Robert was not likely to restrict himself as a student, to its limits. On starting from home on the Monday, it was his practice to take with him two or three books from his father's library, that he might read them in the intervals between the school hours. The books he selected were not those of mere amusement, but such as required deep and serious thought. The works of Jonathan Edwards, for example, were among his favorites; and it is an ascertained fact, that before he was nine years of age, he had perused—and reperused—with intense interest, the treatises of that profound and extraordinary thinker, on the "Affections," and on the "Will." About the same time he read, with a like interest, "Butler's Analogy." He used to ascribe his early predilection for this class of studies, in great measure, to his intimate association, in mere childhood, with a tailor, one of his father's congregation, a very shrewd, well-informed man, and an acute metaphysician. Before he was ten years old, he had written many essays, principally on religious subjects; and often invited his brother and sisters to hear him preach. About this time, too in one of those anticipatory distributions of a father's property, which, I apprehend, are not unusual with boys, he proposed that his brother should have the cows, sheep, and pigs, on their father's death, and leave him "all the books." Those juvenile "dividers of the inheritance," seem to have overlooked their sisters; unless, indeed they assigned them

the furniture. The incident, however, is mentioned simply to show what it was that Robert even then most prized.

He remained at Mr. Simmons's school until he was eleven years of age, when this conscientious master informed the father that he was quite unable to keep pace with his pupil, declaring that he had been often obliged to sit up all night to prepare the lessons for the morning; a practice he could no longer continue, and must therefore relinquish his favorite scholar.

The proofs of extraordinary talent and of devotional feeling which Robert had now for some time exhibited, not only gratified his excellent parents, but seemed to mark the expediency and propriety of devoting him to the sacred office; but the delicate health of the son, and the narrow means of the father, occasioned some perplexity. Mr. Hall, therefore, took his son to Kettering, in order that he might avail himself of the advice of an influential and valued friend residing there, Mr. Beby Wallis. Their interview soon led him to the choice of a suitable boarding-school; but the palid and sickly appearance of the boy exciting Mr. Wallis's sympathy, he prevailed upon his father to leave him at his house for a few weeks, in the hope that change of air would improve his health. This gentleman was so greatly astonished at the precocity of talent of his youthful visitor, that he several times requested him to deliver a short address to a select auditory invited for the purpose. The juvenile orator often afterward adverted to the injury done him by the incongruous elevation to which he was thus raised. "Mr. Wallis," said he, "was one whom every body loved. He belonged to a family in which probity, candor, and benevolence constituted the general likeness: but conceive, sir, if you can, the egregious impropriety of setting a boy of eleven to preach to a company of grave gentlemen, full half of whom wore wigs. I never call the circumstance to mind but with grief at the vanity it inspired; nor, when I think of such mistakes of good men, am I inclined to question the correctness of Baxter's language, strong as it is, where he says, 'Nor should men turn preachers as the river Nilus breeds frogs (saith Herodotus), when one half moveth before the other is made, and while it is yet but plain mud?'"\*

Robert's health appearing much improved from his short residence at Kettering, he was placed by his father as a boarder, at the school of the Rev. John Ryland in the neighboring town of Northampton. Mr. Ryland was a very extraordinary man, whose excellences and eccentricities were strange-

ly balanced. In him were blended the ardor and vehemence of Whitfield, with the intrepidity of Luther. His pulpit oratory was one of the boldest character, and singularly impressive, when he did not overstep the proprieties of the ministerial function. In his school he was both loved and feared; his prevailing kindness and benevolence exciting affection, while his stern determination to do what was right, as well as to require what he *thought* right, too often kept alive among his pupils a sentiment of apprehension and alarm. So far as I can learn, from several who had been under his care, he taught Greek better than Latin, and the rudiments of Mathematical science with more success than those of grammar and the other languages. His pupils never forgot his manner of explaining the doctrine and application of ratios and proportions; and they who had ever formed a part of his "living orrery," by which he incorporated the elements of the solar system among the amusements of the play-ground, obtained a knowledge of that class of facts which they seldom, if ever, lost.

Our youthful student remained under Mr. Ryland's care but little more than a year and a half; during which, however, according to his father's testimony, "he made great progress in Latin and Greek;" while, in his own judgment, the principle of emulation was called into full activity, the habit of composition was brought into useful exercise, the leading principles of abstract science were collected, and a thirst for knowledge of every kind acquired. It should also be mentioned here, that it was during the time Robert was Mr. Ryland's pupil that he heard a sermon preached at Northampton, by Mr. Robins, of Daventry, whose religious instruction, conveyed "in language of the most classic purity," at once "impressive and delightful," excited his early relish for chaste and elegant composition.

From the time he quitted Northampton until he entered the "Bristol Education Society," or academy for the instruction of young men preparing for the ministerial office among the Baptists, he studied divinity, and some collateral subjects, principally under the guidance of his father, with occasional hints from his acute metaphysical friend, still residing in the same village. Having, in this interval, given satisfactory proofs of his piety, and of a strong predilection for the pastoral office, he was placed at the Bristol Institution, upon Dr. Ward's foundation, in October, 1778, being then in his fifteenth year. He remained there until the autumn of 1781, when the president of the institution reported to the general meeting of subscribers and friends, that "two pupils, Messrs. Stennet and Hall, had

\* Saint's Rest, Preface to Part II. Original edition.



been continued upon Dr. Ward's exhibition, but were now preparing to set out for Scotland, according to the Doctor's will."

The Bristol Academy, when Mr. Hall first joined it, was under the superintendence of the Rev. Hugh Evans, who was shortly afterwards succeeded by his son, Dr. Caleb Evans, both as president of the institution, and as pastor of the Baptist church in Broadmead. The Rev. James Newton was the classical tutor. Under these able men he pursued his studies with great ardor and perseverance. He became an early riser; and it was remarked in consequence, that he was often ready to attend the tutor for the morning lessons, before some of his fellow-students had commenced their preparation.

His sentiments at this time respecting his theological tutor, and the importance of his studies in general, may be gathered from the subjoined extracts from two letters to his father, both written before July, 1780.

"Dr. Evans is a most amiable person in every respect: as a man, generous and open-hearted; as a Christian, lively and spiritual; as a preacher, pathetic, and fervent; and as a tutor, gentle, meek, and condescending. I can truly say that he has, on all occasions, behaved to me with the tenderness and affection of a parent, whom I am bound by the most endearing ties to hold in everlasting honor and esteem.

"Through the goodness of God, of whom in all things I desire to be continually mindful, my pursuits of knowledge afford me increasing pleasure, and lay open fresh sources of improvement and entertainment. That branch of wisdom in which, above all others, I wish and crave your assistance is *divinity*, of all others the most interesting and important. It is the height of my ambition, that, in some happy period of my life, my lot may be cast near you, when I may have the unspeakable pleasure of consulting, on different subjects, you, whose judgment I esteem not less than an oracle.

"We poor short-sighted creatures, are ready to apprehend that we know all things, before we know any thing; whereas it is a great part of knowledge to know that we know nothing. Could we behold the vast depths of unfathomed science, or glance into the dark recesses of hidden knowledge, we could be ready to tremble at the precipice, and cry out, 'Who is sufficient for these things?'"

The system of instruction at Bristol comprehended not merely the learned languages and the rudiments of science, but a specific course of preparation for the ministerial office, including the habit of public speaking. Essays and appropriate topics were writ-

ten and delivered, under the direction of the tutors: religious exercises were carefully attended to; and the students were appointed, in turns, to speak or preach upon subjects selected by the president. Among the books first put into Mr. Hall's hands to prepare him for these exercises was Gibbon's Rhetoric, which he read with the utmost avidity, and often mentioned in after life, as rekindling the emotion excited by Mr. Robins's preaching, improving his sensibility to the utility as well as beauty of fine writing, and creating an intense solicitude to acquire an elegant as well as a perspicuous style. He was therefore more active in this department of academical labor than many of his compeers. Usually however, after his written compositions had answered the purpose for which they were prepared, he made no effort to preserve them; but either carelessly threw them aside, or distributed them among his associates, if they expressed any desire to possess them. Some of these early productions, therefore, have escaped the corrosions of time. The only one which I have been able to obtain in an essay on "Ambition," in which there is more of the tumultuary flourish of the orator, than he would ever have approved after he reached his twentieth year. Nor was it correct in sentiment. The sole species of excellence recommended to be pursued was superiority of intellect; all moral qualities, as well as actions directed to the promotion of human welfare, being entirely overlooked.

Indeed, there is reason to apprehend that at this period of his life, Mr. Hall, notwithstanding the correctness and excellence of his general principles, and the regularity of his devotional habits, had set too high an estimate on merely intellectual attainments, and valued himself, not more perhaps than was natural to youth, yet too much, on the extent of his mental possessions. No wonder, then that he should experience salutary mortification. And thus it happened. He was appointed, agreeably to the arrangement already mentioned, to deliver an address in the vestry of Broadmead chapel, on 1 Tim. v. 10. "Therefore, we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men; specially of those that believe." After proceeding, for a short time much to the gratification of his auditory, he suddenly paused, covered his face with his hands, exclaimed, "O! I have lost all my ideas," and sat down his hands still hiding his face. The failure, however, painful as it was to his tutors, and humiliating to himself, was such as rather augmented than diminished their persuasion of what he could accomplish, if once he acquired self-possession. He was therefore appoint

ed to speak again, on the same subject, at the same place, the ensuing week. This second attempt was accompanied by a second failure, still more painful to witness, and still more greivous to bear. He hastened from the vestry, and on retiring to his room, exclaimed, "If *this* does not humble me, the devil, *must* have me!" Such were the early efforts of him whose humility afterwards became as conspicuous as his talents, and who, for nearly half a century, excited universal attention and admiration by the splendor of his pulpit eloquence.

Our student spent the first summer vacation after his entering the Bristol institution under the paternal roof at Arnsby; and, in the course of that residence at home, accompanied his father to some public religious service at Clipstone, a village in Northamptonshire. Mr. Hall, senior, and Mr. Beddome of Bourton, well known by his Hymns, and his truly valuable Sermons, were both engaged to preach. But the latter, being much struck with the appearance, and some of the remarks, of the son of his friend, was exceedingly anxious that *he* should preach in the evening, and proposed to relinquish his own engagement, rather than be disappointed. To this injudicious proposal, after resisting every importunity for some time, he at length yielded; and entered the pulpit to address an auditory of *ministers*, many of whom he had been accustomed from his infancy to regard with the utmost reverence. He selected for his text 1 John i. 5, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" and, it is affirmed, treated this mysterious and awful subject with such metaphysical acumen, and drew from it such an impressive application, as excited the deepest interest.

On the arrival of the summer vacation, in 1780, he again visited Arnsby; and during the period he then remained at home, his father became fully satisfied that his piety was genuine, as well as that his qualifications for the office of a preacher were of a high order. He therefore expressed to many of his friends his desire that he should be "set apart to the sacred work." Solicitous not to be led aside from a correct judgment by the partiality of a father, he resolved that the church over which he was pastor should judge of his son's fitness, and recognise their conviction by a solemn act. The members of the church after cautious and deliberate inquiry, ratified the decision of the anxious parent, and earnestly and unanimously requested "that Robert Hall, jun. might be set apart to public employ."

"Accordingly," as the following extract from "the Church-book" testifies, on the 13th of August, 1780, "he was examined by his father before the church, respecting his inclination, motives, and end, in reference

to the ministry, and was likewise desired to make a declaration of his religious sentiments. All which being done to the entire satisfaction of the church,\* they therefore set him apart by lifting up their right hands, and by solemn prayer.

"His father then delivered a discourse to him, from 2 Tim. ii. 1. *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* Being thus sent forth, he preached in the afternoon from 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* May the Lord bless him, and grant him great success!"

It is worthy of observation that, on this solemn occasion, as well as when he preached at Clipstone, Mr. Hall selected texts of the class most calculated to elicit those peculiar powers for which he was through life distinguished.

In little more than a year after Mr. Hall had been thus publicly designated a preacher of the gospel, having pursued his studies at Bristol with great assiduity and corresponding success, he was, as already hinted, appointed to King's College, Aberdeen, on Dr. Ward's foundation. In his

\* As the words *church*, *deacon*, &c., when used by congregational dissenters, whether Baptist or Pædobaptist, are employed in senses differing from what are current among Episcopalians, I annex this brief note to prevent misconception.

Among the orthodox dissenters of the class just specified, a distinction is always made between a church and a congregation. A congregation includes the whole of an assembly collected in one place for worship, and may therefore comprehend, not merely real Christians, but nominal Christians, and, it may be, unbelievers, who, from various motives often attend public worship. The church is constituted of that portion of these who after cautious investigation, are believed, in the exercise of judgment and charity, to be real Christians. It is regarded as the duty of such to unite themselves in fellowship with a church, and conform to its rules; and the admission is by the suffrage of the members of the respective church; its connected congregation having no voice in this matter. A Christian church is regarded as a voluntary society, into which the members are incorporated under the authority of Christ, whose laws they engage to obey, for the important purposes of promoting the mutual improvement of those who compose it by an orderly discharge of religious duties, and of bringing others to the knowledge of the truth. Every such church of Christ is considered as an independent society, having a right to enjoy its own sentiments, to choose its own officers, maintain in its own discipline, admit members, or expel them on persisting in conduct unworthy of the Christian profession; without being controlled or called to an account by any others whatever.

Such a church, as a Christian community, observes the sacrament, or "communion of the body and blood of Christ," at stated seasons; the members of other churches being admissible, with the consent of the members present, on any specific occasion.

The officers of such a church consists of bishops or presbyters (i. e. pastors) and deacons. The latter are not, as in the Church of England, and among other Episcopalians, an order of the clergy, but are *laymen*. They are chosen from among the members of the church, and their business is 'to see that the table of the Lord, the table of the poor, and the table of the minister be supplied.' They attend to the secular concerns of the church, as a body, and to all that relates to the convenience of the society, in reference to their public meetings. In many societies, too, they assist the pastor in his general superintendence.



journey thither, he was accompanied by Mr. Joseph Stennett, the son of the late Rev. Dr. Stennett, and another student Mr. John Powhall, still living. The two former of these had letters to the venerable Dr. Erskine of Edinburgh; and he again supplied them with introductions to two eminent individuals at Aberdeen. This appears from a letter sent by the doctor, 2d Nov. 1781, to Mr. Ryland of Northampton, from which as it exhibits his view of the state of things at Aberdeen at that period, I present a brief extract.

"I had the pleasure of your letter by Messrs. Stennett and Hall last week. They appear to me pleasant young men, and I should have been happy to have had further opportunities of showing my regard to the children of so worthy parents than their short stay here allowed. Though there are many excellent teachers at Aberdeen, and both they and the ministers are remarkable for purity of morals, I have some fears, from different accounts, that the general strain of preaching there is less evangelical than in several pulpits in Glasgow or Edinburgh. Principal Campbell and Dr. Beattie are, in my opinion, able and worthy men; and my difference with the first, as to the American war and the popish bill has not impaired our mutual esteem. I wrote letters to introduce the young gentlemen to both."

Mr. Hall, for many years afterward, used often to speak of the affectionate attentions of Dr. Erskine on this occasion; and of his own feelings when on taking leave the venerable man of God exhorted him to self-vigilance, kissed him, laid his hand upon his head, blessing him, and commending him to the watchful care of the great Head of the church.

At the time when he went to Aberdeen, the reputation of the two colleges, King's and Marischal College, was almost equally balanced. At the latter, Principal Campbell and Dr. Beattie, professor of moral philosophy, had attained a high and merited celebrity both on account of their lectures and their writings: while at King's College, the divinity lectures of Dr. Gerard were much and greatly esteemed; and some of the other professors were men of eminence. Many, therefore, especially of the divinity students, attended the appropriate lectures at the two colleges.\*

\* At King's College, during Mr. Hall's studies there, Mr. John Leslie was professor of Greek; Mr. Roderick Macleod, professor of philosophy, including mathematics; Mr. W. Ogilvie, professor of humanity; Mr. James Dunbar, professor of moral philosophy; and Dr. Alexander Gerard professor of divinity. Though some of these were highly distinguished men, Dr. Gerard was most known to the world of English literature. Among his works are "an Essay on Genius," "An Essay on Taste," two volumes of valuable Sermons, and his "Lectures on the Pastoral Care," published in 1799 by his son, Dr. Gilbert Gerard.

Mr. Hall, in a letter addressed to his deservedly prized friend the late Dr. Ryland, towards the end of this first session at college, speaks thus of his studies and of two of the professors:

"We entered the Greek class under Mr. Leslie, who, though a man of no apparent brightness of parts, is notwithstanding, well fitted for his office, being a good grammarian, and attentive to the interests of his pupils. We have been employed in the class in going over more accurately the principles of the Greek language, and reading select passages in Xenophon and Homer: and I have privately read through Xenophon's *Anabasis*, and *Memorabilia* of Socrates, several books of Homer, and some of the Greek Testament; and am now reading *Longini de Sublimitate liber*, which I hope to finish next week."

In the same letter he mentions his reading with Professor Ogilvie, whose versions of the Latin poets he characterizes as "extremely elegant." He laments the want of religious advantages in this seat of learning, and deplores the profanity and profligacy of many of the students; one of whom, he assures his friend, affirmed that he knew no use even in the word "God," except to give point to an oath! To make up for this sad deficiency, he adds, "We have found some agreeable acquaintances in the New Town, and among them the sister of Mr. Cruden, the author of the *Concordance*."

The same letter contains evidence that he did not confine his attention solely to classical and mathematical studies. After expressing his admiration of the devotional as well as rational spirit that "lives and breathes" in every page of Edwards, he adds:

"My thoughts are at present too much immersed in literary exercises to admit of long or close application of thought to any thing else. I have, however, been thinking a little on the distinction of *natural* and *moral ability*, and have in my mind an objection upon which I should be glad to have your thoughts. It is briefly this: If, according to Edwards, the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding, and if it be determined, directed, and biased by the view of the understanding what room then is left for any notion of moral ability as distinct from natural? or how can there in this case be any depravity of the will, without supposing a prior defect in the understanding? Since the will, if it be wrong in its bias, is first led to that bias by the understanding; and where then the possibility of a *moral inability*

consisting with a *natural ability*? This I hope to have some conversation with you upon when I have the happiness of seeing you. I have with me Edwards on the Will, and have lately perused it often; and the more I read it the more I admire."

The lamented death of Sir James Mackintosh has left a blank which none can adequately fill, with regard to Mr. Hall's character, habits, and the development of his intellectual powers at this period. On application, however, to an esteemed friend, Professor Paul, he has kindly communicated a few particulars, which I shall give in his own language.

"What I now transmit is drawn from the college records, from the recollection of Dr. Jack, principal of King's College, and formerly for three years a class-fellow of Mr. Hall, and from my own knowledge; for I, also, was a contemporary of Mr. Hall, having commenced my first year's studies when he commenced his fourth. It appears from the album that Mr. Hall entered college in the beginning of November, 1781. His first year was spent principally under the tuition of Mr. Professor Leslie, in the acquisition of the Greek language; his second, third, and fourth years under that of Mr. Professor Macleod, when he studied mathematics, natural philosophy and moral philosophy. He took his degree in arts (i. e. A. M. degree) on the 30th of March, 1785. Principal Jack says that he attended the professor of humanity, Mr. Ogilvie, during the four years he was at college, both for Latin and natural history; but as there is no record of the students of the humanity and natural history classes, this fact depends wholly on the principal's recollection. I learn from the same source that Sir James Mackintosh and Mr. Hall while at college read a great deal of Greek in private, and that their reputation was high among their fellow-students for their attainments in that language. Principal Jack also bears testimony to Mr. Hall's great success in his mathematical and philosophical studies, and affirms that he was the first scholar of his class, in the various branches of education taught at college. During one of the sessions the principal was member of a select literary society, consisting of only eight or ten students, of which society Sir James and Mr. Hall were the distinguished ornaments. None of Mr. Hall's college exercises are now to be found in this place; but my impressions correspond with those of the principal, that his acquirements were of the very first order; and as Sir James left college before I entered, having received his A. M. degree 30th March, 1784, there was no one at col-

lege in my time who could be at all put in competition with Mr. Hall. But it was not as a scholar alone that Mr. Hall's reputation was great at college. He was considered by all the students as a model of correct and regular deportment, of religious and moral habits, of friendly and benevolent affections."

To this concise summary I subjoin the few particulars which I gathered from Sir James Mackintosh himself.

When these two eminent men first became acquainted, Sir James was in his eighteenth year, Mr. Hall about a year older. Sir James described Mr. Hall as attracting notice by a most ingenuous and intelligent countenance, by the liveliness of his manner, and by such indications of mental activity as could not be misinterpreted. His appearance was that of health yet not of robust health; and he often suffered from paroxysms of pain, during which he would roll about on the carpet in the utmost agony; but no sooner had the pain subsided than he would resume his part in conversation with as much cheerfulness and vivacity as before he had been thus interrupted. Sir James said he became attached to Mr. Hall, "because he could not help it." There wanted many of the supposed constituents of friendship. Their tastes at the commencement of their intercourse were widely different; and upon most of the important topics of inquiry there was no congeniality of sentiment; yet notwithstanding this, the *substratum* of their minds seemed of the same cast, and upon this Sir James thought the edifice of their mutual regard first rested. Yet he ere long became fascinated by his brilliancy and acumen, in love with his cordiality and ardor, and "awe-struck" (I think that was the term employed) by the transparency of his conduct and the purity of his principles. They read together; they sat together at lecture, if possible; they walked together. In their joint studies they read much of Xenophon and Herodotus, and more of Plato; and so well was all this known, exciting admiration in some, in others envy, that it was not unusual as they went along for their class-fellows to point at them and say, "*There go Plato and Herodotus.*" But the arena in which they met most frequently was that of morals and metaphysics; furnishing topics of incessant disputation. After having sharpened their weapons by reading, they often repaired to the spacious sands upon the seashore, and still more frequently to the picturesque scenery on the banks of the Don, above the Old Town, to discuss with eagerness the various subjects to which their attention had been directed. There



was scarcely an important position in Berkeley's Minute Philosopher, in Butler's Analogy, or in Edwards on the Will, over which they had not thus debated with the utmost intensity. Night after night, nay, month after month, for two sessions, they met only to study or to dispute; yet no unkindly feeling ensued. The process seemed rather like blows in that of welding iron to knit them closer together. Sir James said, that his companion as well as himself often contended for victory, yet never, so far as he could then judge, did either make a voluntary sacrifice of truth, or stoop to draw to and fro the *serra λογομαχίας*, as is too often the case with ordinary controvertists. From these discussions, and from subsequent meditation upon them, Sir James learned more *as to principles* (such at least he assured me was his deliberate conviction) than from all the books he ever read. On the other hand, Mr. Hall through life reiterated his persuasion, that his friend possessed an intellect more analogous to that of Bacon than that any person of modern times; and that if he had devoted his powerful understanding to metaphysics, instead of law and politics, he would have thrown an unusual light upon that intricate but valuable region of inquiry. Such was the cordial, reciprocal testimony of these two distinguished men. And in many respects—latterly I hope and believe in all the most essential—it might be truly said of both “as face answereth to face in a glass, so does the heart of a man to his friend.”

It will be seen from the first of the series of letters inserted in the volume, that, shortly after Mr. Hall's return to Aberdeen in November, 1783, he received an invitation from the church at Broadmead to associate himself with Dr. Caleb Evans, as the assistant pastor; an invitation which he accepted with much doubt and diffidence. After some correspondence it was arranged that Mr. Hall should reside at Bristol, in the interval (of nearly six months) between the college sessions of 1784 and 1785, and then return to Aberdeen to complete his course. In this important session, from the beginning of November, 1784, to May, 1785, he seems to have devoted himself most sedulously to his studies; especially the Greek language, with moral and intellectual philosophy, and those other departments of inquiry which are most intimately related to theology. During the session, too, he attended Campbell's lectures at Marischal College, and frequently profited by the doctor's expository discourses, delivered once each fortnight; while he generally attended public worship at the church where Mr. Abercromby and Mr. Peters, both regarded as holding correct

sentiments, were the alternate preachers. He had now lost his chosen companion, the sharpener of his faculties by animated yet friendly debate; and he sought for no substitute in society, but resolved to turn the deprivation into a benefit, by a more arduous application to his literary pursuits, and by cultivating habits of meditation. “I now,” said he, in a letter to his father, “find retirement prodigiously sweet, and here I am entirely uninterrupted and left to my own thoughts.” In this disposition he commenced and concluded the session.

By the time Mr. Hall had thus completed his academical course, his mental powers, originally strong, had attained an extraordinary vigor; and with the exception of the Hebrew language, of which he then knew nothing, he had become rich in literary, intellectual, and biblical acquisition. On resuming his labors at Broadmead, in conjunction with Dr. Evans, his preaching excited an unusual attention, the place of worship was often crowded to excess, and many of the most distinguished men in Bristol, including several clergymen, were among his occasional auditors.

This popularity not only continued, but increased, until he removed to another sphere of action. The brilliancy and force of his eloquence were universally acknowledged; while, in private life, his instructive and fascinating conversation drew equal admiration. Yet it ought not to be concealed (for I simply announce his own deliberate conviction, frequently expressed in after-life) that at this time he was very inadequately qualified for the duties of a minister of the gospel. He had, it is true, firmly embraced and cordially relied upon those fundamental truths which are comprehended in the declaration, “He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him;” and he often expiated, with much originality and beauty, upon the Divine attributes, and constantly exhorted men to adhere closely to the path of duty; yet, not often from the higher, namely, the evangelical motives, to pure, and benevolent, and holy conduct. His knowledge of Christianity, as a system of restoration and reconciliation, was comparatively defective and obscure; and he felt but little alive to those peculiarities of the new dispensation, upon which, in maturer life, he loved to dwell. In his preaching he dealt too much in generalities, or enlarged upon topics which, though in a certain sense noble and inspiring, and thus calculated to elevate the mind, did not immediately flow from the great scheme of redemption, which it was his especial office to disclose. The extent of God's

matchless love and mercy; the depth of the mystery of his designs; the inexhaustible treasury of his blessings and graces; the wonderful benefits flowing from the incarnation, humiliation, and sacrifice of the Son of God; the delightful privileges of the saints; were themes to which he recurred far less frequently than in later days; and he persuaded himself that this was not *very* wrong, because his colleague, Dr. Evans, who had "the care of the church," adverted so incessantly to the doctrines of our Lord's Divinity and atonement, or spiritual influence and regeneration, as to leave room for *him* to explore other regions of instruction and interest.

It is possible that Mr. Hall, from his habit of self-depreciation, may have a little overcharged this picture: yet the notes of several of his sermons, preached from 1785 to 1789, taken down by one of the congregation, and which are now in my possession, confirm, to a considerable extent, the existence of the serious defect which he subsequently so much deplored.

Considering his early age, twenty-one, it was manifestly unfavorable to the correct development of his character *as a preacher*, that in August, 1785, only three months after his quitting Aberdeen, he was appointed classical tutor in the Bristol Academy, on the resignation of Mr. Newton. That additional appointment he held for more than five years, and discharged its duties with marked zeal and activity, and with commensurate success. At this period of his life he was celebrated as a satirist, and would overwhelm such of his associates as tempted him to the use of those formidable weapons with wit and railery, not always playful. Aware, however, that this propensity was calculated to render him unamiable, and to give permanent pain to others (a result which the generosity of his disposition made him anxious to avoid,) he endeavored to impose a restraint upon himself, by writing the essay on the "Character of Cleander;" in which he exposes, with just severity, that species of sarcasm to which he believed himself most prone; and thus, by its publication, gave to others the opportunity, when he slid into this practice, of reproving him in his own language.

It seems to have been remarkably, and doubtless mercifully, overruled, that during this period of Mr. Hall's history, though his more judicious and wise friends were often grieved by the free and daring speculations which he advanced in private, he never promulgated direct and positive error from the pulpit. And thus they who were filled with apprehension on account of sallies in conversation would listen with delight to his public addresses. This will

be evinced by a few extracts from the journals of two of his constant friends.

Mr. Fuller writes, "1784, May 7. Heard Mr. Robert Hall, jun., from 'He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.' Felt very solemn in hearing some parts. The Lord keep that young man!"

Again, "1785, June 14. Taken up with the company of Mr. Robert Hall, jun.; feel much pain for him. The Lord, in mercy to him and his churches in this country, keep him in the path of truth and righteousness."

In like manner, Dr. Ryland: "June 8, 1785. Robert Hall, jun., preached wonderfully from Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us.' I admire many things in this young man exceedingly, though there are others that make me fear for him. O that the Lord may keep him humble, and make him prudent!"

Again, "June 15. Rode to Clipstone to attend the minister's meeting. R. Hall, jun., preached a glorious sermon, on the immutability of God, from James i. 17, 'The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.'"

Again, "1786, June 13. Sent off a letter to Robert Hall, jun., which I wrote chiefly in answer to one of his some months ago, wherein he replied to mine concerning some disagreeable reports from Birmingham: added some new hints respecting another matter lately reported. O that God may keep that young man in the way of truth and holiness."

It hence appears, that Dr. Ryland, who was nearly twelve years older than Mr. Hall, and had known him from his childhood, did not rest satisfied with silent lamentations. This excellent man, fearing that his young friend was about to precipitate himself into a very dangerous course, sought by kind but strong expostulation to rescue him from the peril; and thus addressed him:

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"The fullest consciousness that I have a right to call you so, as really feeling an earnest and tender concern for your welfare, and the recollection that you apparently allowed it when I last saw you, encourages me to write to you: though I may as well tell you at once that I am going to write to you in the same strain of complaint and censure which I have been constrained to use before. And indeed my fears and grief were never excited to such a degree concerning you as they now are. I still hope, however, you have much love



to God; and I trust so much conviction of my sincere friendship, that you will not say of me as one said of Micaiah, 'I hate him, for he is always saying evil of me.' Indeed, the things that grieve me I shall industriously conceal from everybody as long as I can; but I fear they will spread fast enough: for if you openly utter all your mind, there are not many who will mourn in secret over the report.

"It gave me extreme uneasiness to hear this week, of the general disgust you had given to your former friends at Birmingham on your last visit. Verily I wish that neither you, nor I, nor others may fight for the truth with infernal weapons. I would wish to feel in my inmost soul the tenderest pity for the most erroneous men in the world, and to show all proper respect to men of science, and men who are regular in their outward conduct. Nor should I at all approve of violent or harsh language, or like to speak my opinion of the state of individuals. But at the same time, I cannot but think that the lusts of the *mind* may as effectually ruin a man as 'the lusts of the *flesh*.' And I must get a good way towards Socinianism myself before I have any strong hope that a Socinian, living and dying such, will see the kingdom of God. When the merciful Jesus declared, 'He that believeth shall be saved,' &c., I cannot believe that he meant simply, that he shall be saved who believes that *Jesus was not an impostor*, and who believes the *doctrine of the resurrection*. But these two articles are, I believe, the whole of Dr. Priestley's Christianity, and if once I were to think this Christianity enough to carry a man to heaven, I should not, I fear be very strenuous in my endeavors to convince men of the danger of self-righteousness, and the necessity of a reliance on the atonement. Oh! my dear friend, can I conceive that your mind was deeply impressed with a sense of the divine purity and the justice of God's law, when you could utter so vain and vile a speech as this?"

The doctor then cites the language imputed to Mr. Hall. It implied, that if he were the Judge of all, he could not condemn Dr. Priestley. After animadverting strongly upon the phrase which he understood was actually employed, he proceeds thus:

"It is, I am sure, not manevolence, but sincere love, that makes me jealous of you. May the Lord keep you. I wish you would look over afresh the epistle to the Galatians and examine whether your charity is as chaste as Paul's. I allude to a proverb you have doubtless heard—'Charity is an

angel while she rejoiceth in the truth, a harlot when she rejoiceth in iniquity;' embracing those whom she should rather pity and weep over.

"Study to enter into the very spirit of Paul's discourse, 1 Cor. i. 18—31, or Gal. ii. 15, 21; and if this is consistent with supposing it would be unfair for God to punish any man for rejecting the gospel, who understood chymistry and philosophy, why, then retain your favorable opinion of the safety of Socinians.

"Receive this as a proof of the affection with which I am

"Your faithful friend

"J. RYLAND."

Many high-spirited young men, we can readily imagine, would have treated such a letter as this with contempt; while others would have replied to it in a lofty tone of surprise and indignation. But Dr. Ryland's young friend, notwithstanding the errors into which his impetuosity had hurried him, had too much generosity to regard as insulting what he knew was dictated by affection; and therefore, anxious to show that he could bear reproof, and be thankful for it, he promptly replied:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I have just received your letter, and think it of so much importance as to deserve an immediate answer. Accordingly without the least delay, I have set myself to reply to it. I am exceedingly obliged to you for your friendly expostulation, because I know it is the effusion of a pious and benevolent heart that wishes me well. With respect to the conversation at Birmingham, to which you allude, I shall conceal nothing."

He then, at the same time that he denies the precise language that was imputed to him, states what he did really say; and aims to justify the sentiment which he had maintained: disclaiming, however, any approximation to Socinian doctrine.

"You seem to suspect I am far gone in Socinianism; but in this, my dear friend, give me leave to say, you are utterly mistaken. Since I first began to reflect, I do not recollect a time when I was less inclined to Socinianism than at present. I can truly say, it would remove from me all my salvation and all my desire."

Again reverting to the expression, he adds,

"Allowing it to be improper, or too strong, I can only say, it does not belong to all to speak equally temperately; that the

crime of expression can only be judged from the feelings, and that I am certain I did not *utter* it with any lightness of heart but with deep feelings of earnestness and sincerity. Your charge of imprudence I cordially admit; and now see, with more clearness than I formerly did, that the imprudent should never come into company with the malicious.

"I had more to say; but have no room. I sincerely thank you for your letter, and shall always be extremely grateful for your correspondence, with good wishes, and your prayers.

"Believe me, as ever,

"affectionately yours,

"R. HALL, junior."

These letters would not have been inserted after the lapse of fifty years, but for the salutary lesson which they supply. If Christian friendship always manifested itself in such fidelity as is here evinced, and uniformly experienced so kind and ingenuous a reception, what a different aspect, in a few years, would the Christian world assume!

When Mr. Hall was about twenty-three years of age, he had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Robinson, his predecessor at Cambridge, preach; and was so fascinated with his manner as to resolve to *imitate* it. But after a few trials he relinquished the attempt. The circumstance being afterward alluded to, he observed, "Why, sir, I was too proud to *remain* an imitator. After my second trial, as I was walking home, I heard one of the congregation say to another, 'Really, Mr. Hall *did* remind us of Mr. Robinson!' That, sir, was a knock-down blow to my vanity; and I at once resolved that if ever I *did* acquire reputation, it would be my own reputation, belonging to my own character, and not be that of a *likeness*. Besides, sir,\* if I had not been a foolish young man I should have seen how ridiculous it was to imitate such a preacher as Mr. Robinson. He had a musical voice 'and was master of all its intonations; he had wonderful self-possession, and could say *what* he pleased, *when* he pleased, and *how* he pleased; while my voice and manner were naturally bad; and far from having self-command, I never entered the pulpit without omitting to say something that I wished to say, and saying something that I wished unsaid: and besides all this, I ought to have known that for me to *speak slow was ruin*.'" "Why so?" "I wonder that you, a student of philosophy, should ask such a question. You know, sir, that force, of momentum, is conjointly as the body and velocity; therefore, as my voice is feeble,

what is wanted in body must be made up in velocity, or there will not be, cannot be any impression."

This remark, though thrown off hastily, in unreserved conversation, presents the theory of *one* important cause of the success of his rapid eloquence.

Shortly after this, Mr. Hall was, for the first time, in Mr. Robinson's society; I believe in London. Mr. Robinson was affluent in flatteries for those who worshipped him, while Mr. Hall neither courted flattery nor scattered its incense upon others. In speaking of the Socinian controversy, the elder indulged in sarcasm upon "juvenile defenders of the faith," and made various efforts to "set the young man down," which tempted Mr. Hall to reply that "if *he* ever rode into the field of public controversy, he should not borrow Dr. Abbadie's *boots*." This enigmatical retort\* Mr. Robinson understood, and probably felt more than Mr. Hall had anticipated; for he had about that time quitted the field, put off "the boots," and passed to the verge of Socinianism. In the course of some discussions that followed, Mr. Hall, as most of those who were present thought, completely exposed the dangerous sophistry by which Mr. Robinson endeavored to explain away some very momentous truths. Mr. Robinson, perceiving that the stream of opinion fell in with the arguments of his young opponent, and vexed at being thus foiled, lost his usual placidity and courtesy, and suddenly changed the topic of conversation, saying, "The company may be much better employed than by listening to a raw school-boy, whose head is crammed with Scotch metaphysics." Nothing but a consciousness that the "raw school-boy" had defeated him would have thus thrown him off his guard.

In 1788, Mr. Hall, weary of the solitude to which he was often subjected, as a mere lodger, and anticipating marriage in the course of a few months (an anticipation, however, which was not realized,) hired a house; his sister Mary, afterward Mrs. James, kindly consenting to superintend his domestic concerns. From a letter which he then wrote to his father I extract a few passages.

"Feb. 10th. 1788.

"We have a great deal of talk here about the slave-trade; as I understand, from your letter, you have had too. A petition has been sent from hence to parliament for the abolishing it; and a commit-

\* The allusion was to the defence of the Divinity of our Lord, published in French, by Dr. Abbadie in his "Vindication of the Truth of the Christian Religion;" a work from which Mr. Robinson was thought to have borrowed many of the arguments in his "Plea for the Divinity," &c. without acknowledgment.

\* Mr. Hall very frequently repeated the word *sir* in his conversation, especially if he became animated



tee is formed to co-operate with that in London, in any measures that may be taken to promote their purpose. At Bristol much opposition is made by the merchants and their dependents, who are many, perhaps most of them, engaged in it. Our petition was signed by eight hundred, or upwards; which, considering that *no application has been made to any*, we think a great number. Many things have been written in the papers on both sides: some pieces I have written myself under the signature *Britannicus*, which I purpose to get printed in a few pamphlets, and shall send one of them to you. The injustice and inhumanity of the trade are glaring, and upon this ground I mainly proceed: upon the *policy* of abolishing it I treat lightly, because I am dubious about it; nor can it be of great consequence to the question in hand; for, if it be proved cruel and unjust it is impious to defend it. . . . .

"I am afraid the abolition will not take place speedily, if at all. The trading and mercantile interest will make great outcry; the scheme will be thought chimerical, and after producing a few warm speeches, will, I fear, die away."

\* \* \* \* \*

"My own temper, I know, needs some correction, and it will be my daily endeavor to mend it: it wants *gentleness*. Mr. M—— has done me much good by convincing me, from his own example, to what perfection a temper naturally keen and lofty may be carried."

\* \* \* \* \*

"So far, I am happy that my duty and my gratification lie in the same direction: so that every step I take towards improvement may be a step towards real pleasure. One inconvenience, indeed, I labor under with respect to my temper, by being connected with my sister: and that is, *she never tries it.*"

A serious trial of another kind now, however, awaited Mr. Hall—a painful misunderstanding between him and his friend and colleague Dr. Evans. It continued not only to disturb the minds of both, but, as might be expected, to create partisans among their respective friends, and indeed to endanger the peace of the church at Broadmead, for more than two years. I have read various written papers, and some pamphlets, which relate to this painful affair; and cannot but conclude that, like many others, it originated in such trifling misconceptions as, in more felicitous circumstances, neither party would have suffered to disturb his thoughts for an hour. A few hasty expressions, retorted by others both hasty and strong, tempted the doctor and his friends to accuse Mr. Hall

of ingratitude, and a want of deference to his superior in age and station; he, in his turn, repelled the accusation, in language too natural to a young man glowing with a lofty spirit of independence: and thus, new charges and fresh recriminations arose. The interposition of friends availed but little; for their unhallowed passions became ignited too. After many months spent in this unseemly strife, a meeting between the belligerent parties was held, in the presence of two friends of each, at the Mansion House, the Mayor of Bristol being one of the persons chosen by Dr. Evans. No beneficial effects resulted from this meeting; the individuals, who hoped by their interposition to ensure the restoration of amity, having long before ceased to be impartial judges in the affair. The parties on both sides, who were convened on the occasion, published their respective statements; from which it appears that one of them thought Mr. Hall justifiable and censured Dr. Evans; while the other approved of the doctor's conduct, and condemned that of Mr. Hall.

It will not, then, be expected that I should draw from the obscurity which time has cast over them more particulars relating to this unhappy collision. Nor, indeed, should I have adverted to it, had it not operated strongly in preparing Mr. Hall for his removal from Bristol. Whatever regret it might occasion him, on subsequent meditation it excited no self-reproach, nor left any malevolent feeling. On the decease of Dr. Evans, which took place in 1791, his former colleague prepared an inscription for his monument; and he wrote the following letter to his brother-in-law, Mr. Isaac James, in reply to that which announced the doctor's death.

"Cambridge, Aug. 12, 1791.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"The contents of your letter received this day have affected me more than almost any thing of the kind I ever met with in my life. It is in all points of view a most solemn event; but, from obvious circumstances, to *me* it cannot fail of being peculiarly so. It is truly affecting to recollect the friendship that so long subsisted between us, and that it should end so unhappily in a breach that admits of no repair, no remedy! Yet, though I feel most pungently upon this occasion, I am happy to be able to join with you in declaring that my conscience is not loaded with guilt. Abating too much of an unhappy violence, I have the *mens conscia recti*. Were the circumstances to occur again, a breach would, as before, be inevitable. But though, in injustice to myself, I say thus much, there is no one more disposed to la-

ment the deceased than myself, or who has a truer sensibility of the real virtues of his character. I have written to Mr. Higgs, and therefore I need say the less to you upon these melancholy topics. The chief purpose, indeed, of my troubling you at present is to request you will be so kind as to give me the earliest and most particular account of every thing that passes at his funeral; the persons present, the sermon, the impression of the event, deep no doubt and awful, the whole state of things at Bristol, their future prospects and intentions, every thing relating to these matters that you know. The situation of the family and the church, though I doubt not I am the object of their joint abhorrence, I most sincerely compassionate. May God guide and comfort them. I think you and all my friends ought now to bury all that is past and renew a connection with the church, if their temper will permit you. My friends will *most oblige me* by carrying it respectfully to the doctor's family and memory. 'Anger may glance into the bosom of a wise man, but it rests only in the bosom of fools;' and our best improvement of the death of this useful servant of God will be to imitate his excellences and forget his errors. Pray write as soon as possible. I shall be extremely impatient till I hear. I am dear brother,

"Your affectionate brother,

"R. HALL."

"To Mr. Isaac James."

Before this time it was generally apprehended that Mr. Hall's sentiments had, on some momentous points, deviated considerably from the accredited standards of even moderate orthodoxy; and he had given much pain to some of his Baptist friends on account of his views with regard to re-baptizing. Some correspondence took place between him and the Broadmead church on these subjects: and, as well that the sentiments he then really held may be known, as that the extent of his declension into positive error may be judged of from his own language, I shall here insert the frank exposition of his opinions, which he addressed to the church when he was on the eve of dissolving his connection with it.

"Thursday, Dec. 9th. 1790.

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,

"Every token of your respect and attachment sensibly affects me; and, as you have requested me to explain myself on those sentiments to which I alluded as reasons of separation, I think it a duty I owe to myself and to you to give you all the satisfaction in my power.

"1st. In the first place, I am a firm be-

liever in the proper divinity of Jesus Christ; in the merits of Christ as the sole ground of acceptance in the sight of God, without admitting works to have any share in the great business of justification; and in the necessity of Divine influence to regenerate and sanctify the mind of every man, in order to his becoming a real Christian. Thus far in the affirmative.

"2dly. In the second place, I am not a Calvinist, in the strict and proper sense of that term. I do not maintain the federal headship of Adam, as it is called, or the imputation of his sin to his posterity; and this doctrine I have always considered, and do still consider, as the foundation of that system. I believe we have received from our first parents, together with various outward ills, a corrupt and irregular bias of mind; but, at the same time, it is my firm opinion that we are liable to condemnation *only* for our own actions, and that *guilt* is a personal and individual thing. I believe in the doctrine of the Divine decrees, and of course in the predestination of all events, of which the number of the finally saved is one. But this appears to me a different thing from the doctrine of absolute election and reprobation, as it had ever been explained by Calvinists, which does not meet my approbation. Without going into a large field of metaphysical discussion, this is all I think it requisite to say respecting my orthodoxy; but there are two other points which have occasioned a good deal of conversation, and from some quarters a good deal of censure; upon which I shall therefore beg leave to explain myself in a few words.

"3dly. I am, and have been for a long time, a materialist, though I have never drawn your attention to this subject in my preaching: because I have always considered it myself, and wished you to consider it, as a *mere metaphysical speculation*. My opinion, however, upon this head is, that the nature of man is simple and uniform; that the thinking powers and faculties are the result of a certain organization of matter; and that after death he ceases to be conscious *until the resurrection*."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Much has been said upon my opinions respecting baptism, and I am happy to have this opportunity of explaining my sentiments on that subject in particular, as it affects, not only the propriety of my former relation to this church, but of any future connection I may form with any other Christian society. On this point much mistake, much misrepresentation, I hope not voluntary, has taken place; and on this account I trust you will excuse my dwelling upon it a little more particularly than its importance in other respects might



seem to justify. It has been held out to the world by some that I am *not a Baptist* I am, both in respect to the subject and to the mode of this institution, a Baptist. To apply this ordinance to infants appears to me a perversion of the intention of the sacred institution; and the primitive, the regular proper mode of administration I take to be *immersion*. Still it appears to me that sprinkling, though an innovation, does not deprive baptism of its essential validity, so as to put the person that has been sprinkled *in adult age* upon a footing with the unbaptized. The whole of my sentiments amounts to this; I would not myself baptize in any other manner than by immersion, because I look upon immersion as the ancient mode, that it best represents the meaning of the original term employed, and the substantial import of this institution; and because I should think it right to guard against the spirit of innovation, which in positive rites is always dangerous and progressive: but I should not think myself authorized to rebaptize any one who has been sprinkled in adult age. I shall only remark, in addition to what I have already said upon this point, that if it be a sufficient objection to my union with a Baptist congregation; then, as all Christendom is composed of Baptists or Pædobaptists, it amounts to my exclusion, as a minister, from every Christian society throughout the whole earth: an interdict equally absurd and inhuman, founded upon a conduct merely negative in chimerical situations seldom or never likely to occur.

"I have thus, in compliance with your wishes, and with all the perspicuity in my power, in a few words explained to you my religious opinions, with a more particular view to the subjects on which I may be supposed most to err; and this avowal I have made, partly as a testimony of the respect I bear you, and partly to vindicate my character from any suspicion of ambiguity or reserve; but not at all with the remotest wish to win popularity or to court your suffrages; for at present it is as little in my power to accept any invitation to continue, as it may be in your inclination to give it, as I hold myself engaged in honor as a probationer for six months to a respectable society at Cambridge. May peace and prosperity attend you.

"I am, your friend and brother,

"With the greatest respect,

"R. HALL."

The vexations and perplexities in which Mr. Hall had been for some time involved doubtless facilitated his removal to another sphere of action. And he who duly medi-

tates upon the way in which the great Head of the church renders the movements of his providence subservient to his merciful purposes in redemption, will, I am persuaded, trace the superintending hand on this occasion.

Mr. Robinson, the pastor of the church at Cambridge with which Mr. Hall was now about to be connected, was a man of extensive powers, of some genius, and of considerable industry and research. Fascinating as a preacher, delightful as a companion, perseveringly skilful in the insinuation of his sentiments, his influence could not but be great. From the profession of orthodox opinions, he had passed by a rather rapid transition, not to Socinianism, but far beyond, to the very borders of infidelity; such, at least, was the substance of his declaration to Dr. Priestley, whom he *thanked* for preserving him from that awful gulf. Vain speculation was substituted for knowledge, faith, and experience, confession and prayer but seldom made a part of the public worship which he conducted, his effusions before sermon consisting almost altogether of ascriptions of praise; and the congregation became so transformed and deteriorated in consequence, that among the more intelligent classes, with only two or three exceptions, "he was esteemed the best Christian who was most skilled in disputation," not he who evinced most of the "spirit of Christ." The majority of the poorer members, however, escaped the contagion, and were ready to co-operate with the late Mr. Foster, who was then the senior deacon, and another of the deacons, who equally deplored the evils which had fallen upon them. Cordially attached to those doctrines which they regarded as fundamental, and therefore as constituting the basis of church union, they were preparing to call upon the whole body to consider the expediency of requesting Mr. Robinson to resign, when his sudden death at Birmingham, just after he had been preaching in Dr. Priestley's pulpit, rendered such a measure unnecessary. On the news of this event reaching Cambridge, Mr. Foster, who was then on his death-bed, made it his last request to some of the most influential men in the church, that they would never consent to the appointment of a Socinian as Mr. Robinson's successor.

From this account of the state of the church at Mr. Robinson's decease, it will appear how difficult it was to select a successor who would be approved by all; how difficult, also, for that successor to walk steadily in the path of duty.

Mr. Hall, who by this time had attained a high reputation as a preacher, was invited, in June or July, 1790, to preach at Cam-

bridge for one month; after which the invitation was renewed for a longer term. In July the following year, he was invited to take the pastoral charge; the letter announcing his acceptance of the important trust will be found in another part of this volume.

In these transactions and their consequences still unfolding, the wisdom and mercy of God are strikingly manifested. There was at that time no man of eminence among the Baptists, besides Mr. Hall, who could for a moment have been thought of by the church at Cambridge as a fit successor to Mr. Robinson; nor was there any Baptist church and congregation with which *he* could become connected with the same prospect of being useful and happy, according to the views he then entertained. Had Mr. Hall's religious principles and feelings been such in 1790 and 1791 as they became a few years afterward, not even *his* talents would have made them palatable; and a connection, had it been formed, would soon have been dissolved: on the other hand, had the church been decidedly and entirely Socinianized he could not conscientiously have become its pastor. The providential correlation soon began to show itself. *Their* looseness of sentiment on many points, which even then he thought momentous, led him to enforce them frequently with the utmost energy; while *his* known freedom of opinion on other points, which they also had been led to canvass freely, preserved him from the odium of orthodoxy. Thinking themselves liberal and unshackled, they could not but congratulate one another that their new pastor, a man of splendid talents, was *almost* as liberal and unshackled as they were. Then again, their want of devotional seriousness, by the force of contrast, heightened his estimate of the value of true piety; and this produced an argumented earnestness and fidelity, which they first learned to tolerate, and afterward to admire. Thus by the operation of an incessant action and reaction, continued for years, each party exerted a salutary influence on the other; and at length both church and pastor became so distinguished for piety, harmony, and affection, that they who had known and lamented their former state were compelled to exclaim, "This hath God wrought."

The death of Mr. Hall's father, which occurred in March, 1791, had indeed tended greatly to bring his mind to the state of serious thought with which he entered upon the pastoral office. Meditating with the deepest veneration upon the unusual excellences of a parent now for ever lost to him, he was led to investigate, with renewed earnestness, the truth as well as

value of those high and sacred principles from which his eminent piety and admirable consistency so evidently flowed. He called to mind, too, several occasions on which his father, partly by the force of reason, partly by that of tender expostulation, had exhorted him to abandon the vague and dangerous speculations to which he was prone. Some important changes in Mr. Hall's sentiments resulted from an inquiry conducted under such solemn impressions; and among these may be mentioned his renunciation of *materialism*, which he often declared he "buried in his father's grave."

Attentive to the voice of heavenly admonition, thus addressing him from various quarters, he entered upon his new duties with earnest desires that he might be able "to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Feeling that to him was consigned the charge of transforming, with God's assistance, a cold and sterile soil into a fruitful field, he determined not to satisfy himself with half-measures, but proceeded to expose error, and defend what he regarded as essential truth. The first sermon, therefore, which he delivered at Cambridge, after he had assumed the office of pastor, was on the doctrine of the atonement, and its practical tendencies. Immediately after the conclusion of the service, one of the congregation, who had followed poor Mr. Robinson through all his changes of sentiment, went into the vestry, and said, "Mr. Hall, this preaching won't do for us: it will only suit a congregation of old women." "Do you mean my sermon, sir, or the doctrine?" "Your doctrine." "Why is it that the *doctrine* is fit only for old women?" "Because it may suit the musings of people tottering upon the brink of the grave, and who are eagerly seeking comfort." "Thank you, sir, for your concession. The doctrine will not *suit* people of any age, unless it be true; and if it *be true*, it is not fitted for old women alone but is equally important at every age."

This individual, and three or four other men of influence, with about twenty from the poorer classes, shortly afterward withdrew from the congregation, and met together on the Sunday evenings at a private house. The then Rev. William Frend, fellow and tutor of Jesus College, an avowed Socinian, became their religious instructor. This separate assembly, however, did not continue many months; for the person at whose house they met was ere long taken up and tried for sedition, and convicted; and the proceedings against Mr. Frend, on account of his pamphlet entitled "Peace and Union," which for so long a time kept the University at Cambridge in a state of great agitation, and



which ended in his expulsion from it, drew away his attention from the little band of seceders.

Mr. Hall's ministerial labors, at this interesting period of his life, were blessed with the happiest results, when the benefit seemed likely to be for a while suspended by the intrusion of *violent* political discussion. The impression made throughout Europe by the French revolution of 1789 was such, that not merely here and there an individual indulged in political speculation, but almost every man threw himself into the vortex of controversy. The clergy of every order and station, the laity of every rank and class, yielded alike to the impulsion; and he who did not declare his decided and cordial adhesion to one or other of the contending parties might expect the censure of both, for his want of spirit or of principle. Cambridge, hitherto characterized as the whig university, was, at this epoch, split into the most violent party divisions, and the public was deluged with sermons from the pulpit, and pamphlets from the press, in which the respective advocates of "things as they are," and of "things as they should be," defended their opposite views with the utmost zeal, and too often with the most unbecoming rancour.

At such a season Mr. Hall, then under thirty years of age, was not likely to maintain an entire silence. When a man's quiescence was sufficient to render his principles equivocal, he was certainly not one who would make a secret of his opinions. He thought that political ethics had almost ceased to be referable to any principle of pure ethics.

He hesitated not to avow that the grand object of all good government must be to promote the happiness of the governed, to assist every individual in its attainment and security. He regarded a government chiefly anxious about the emoluments of office, or aiming to consolidate its own power at home and to aid the efforts of despots abroad, while it neglected the comfort and welfare of individuals in middle or lower life, whose burdens it augmented by a mistaken course, as a government that should be *constitutionally* opposed by every lawful means.

He gave to such subjects, also, more than political considerations. He looked upon those European governments which were founded on oppression, and trampled on the natural rights of man, as operating most fatally in the extinction of light and virtue. He regarded the conditions of those who tyrannize, and of those who are the objects of tyranny, as each productive of a numerous and distinct class of vices; and thought that the consequent darkness, ignorance, and criminality of the general

mass under despotic governments, in great measure, if not entirely, incapacitated them for the pure and elevated enjoyments of heaven. It was hence a permanent conviction of his mind, "that he who is instrumental in perpetuating a corrupt and wicked government is also instrumental in unfitting his fellow-men for the felicity of the celestial mansions." Could it then be matter of surprise that, believing and feeling all this, he should exult when "the empire of darkness and of despotism had been smitten with a stroke which sounded through the universe;" or, when other ministers of the gospel were signaling themselves by opposing this view of things, that he should, for a short interval, be drawn aside from pursuits more congenial with his prevailing tastes, and, in some important respects, I think, more compatible with his holy calling, and at once endeavor to prove that "Christianity is consistent with a love of freedom," and that true Christianity will prevail most where genuine freedom is most diffused and best understood?

Cordial, however, as was Mr. Hall's attachment to a cause in which he conceived man's best interests to be closely interwoven, and strong as was his hatred of despotic measures, or what he regarded as such, either at home or abroad, I do not think that even their joint operation would have overcome his repugnance to writing, had it not been for skilful *abetters*, who first worked upon his feelings, and then extorted from him the promise of preparing a work for the public. Such, if I have not been misinformed, was the origin of his first political pamphlet; and such, I know, was the origin of the eloquent and powerful "Apology for the Freedom of the Press." The evening after the event occurred to which he alludes in the "Apology," he attended a periodical meeting of a book-society, constituted principally of members of his own congregation, and of Mr. Simcon's, and usually denominated *Alderman Ind's Club*, that distinguished ornament of Mr. Simcon's congregation being the treasurer. Every person present expressed himself in terms of the strongest indignation at the insult offered to Mr. Musgrave; every one thought it highly desirable that some man of talent at Cambridge should advocate the principles maintained by the friends of liberty, especially of those who avowed evangelical sentiments, and the necessity for their united activity, in the present state of the country and of Europe. Mr. Hall spoke as decidedly as any of them with regard to the urgent necessities of the case; when they all, having brought him precisely into

the position at which they were aiming, exclaimed that it was he to whom alone they could look in this exigency. "Alderman Ind, you know, sir," said he, "was an excellent man; pure as a seraph, and gentle as a lamb. I thought that if he felt roused, if he could join with the rest in urging me, I might bring all hesitation to a truce; and so, in an evil hour, I yielded to their entreaties. I went home to my lodgings, and began to write immediately: sat up all night; and, wonderful for me, kept up the intellectual ferment for almost a month; and then the thing was done. I revised it a little as it went through the press; but I have ever since regretted that I wrote so hastily and superficially upon some subjects brought forward, which required touching with a master-hand, and exploring to their very foundations. So far as I understand the purely political principles which are advanced in that pamphlet, they are, I believe, correct: at all events they are mine still. But, I repeat it, I yielded in an evil hour; especially if I had any wish to obtain permanent reputation as a political writer. Perhaps, however, the pamphlet had its use in those perilous times." Such was Mr. Hall's account of this publication. How far it indicates the spirit of self-depreciation, in which, almost through life, he characterized his own productions, they who are best acquainted with the "Apology" will be most competent to decide; unless, indeed, their prepossessions and prejudices should disqualify them for deciding aright.

But, whatever might be Mr. Hall's opinion of this work, it does not seem to have been regarded by the public as of little value. Three editions were called for, I believe, within less than six months; and then the author not sanctioning a republication, various editions were printed and circulated surreptitiously. Its more splendid and impressive passages were repeatedly quoted in the periodicals of the day, and many of its arguments were cited as perfectly conclusive. It was also widely circulated in America: and is there still regarded as having been powerfully influential in diffusing those liberal political principles which, of late, have acquired so marked an ascendancy in Britain.

Mr. Hall, however, experienced such inconveniences from his political celebrity, as induced him to recede, not from his principles, or from the avowal of them in private, but from the further advocacy of them in public. It forced upon him the society of men whose conduct and character he could not approve; it tended to draw him, much more than he could conscientiously justify, from retirement and study;

and thus, ere long he became of opinion to adopt his own words, "that the Christian ministry is in danger of losing something of its energy and sanctity, by embarking on the stormy element of political debate." His elegant eulogium on Dr. Priestley, in his first pamphlet, and the warm terms of admiration in which he used to speak of him in private, tempted many to fancy, and to say, that he also was a Socinian at heart; and although his preaching became more and more distinguished by the introduction and energetic application of evangelical truth, he still found himself often so equivocally placed as to render his denial of Socinianism quite imperative. On one of these occasions, Mr. Hall having, in his usual terms, panegyricized Dr. Priestley, a gentleman who held the doctor's theological opinions, tapping Mr. Hall upon the shoulder with an indelicate freedom from which he recoiled, said, "Ah! sir, we shall have *you* among us soon, I see." Mr. Hall, startled and offended by the rude tone of exultation in which this was uttered, hastily replied, "*Me* among *you*, sir! *me* among *you*! Why, if that were ever the case, I should deserve to be tied to the tail of the great red dragon, and whipped round the nethermost regions to all eternity!"

Notwithstanding the reasons Mr. Hall thus had for some degree of reserve, yet in this, as in every period of his life, he displayed a remarkable relish for social intercourse. He did not court the society of literary men; indeed, he rather shrank from it, because he felt the risk of having his thoughts too much engrossed by mere matters of language or of science: he had acquired enough of both to value them greatly; yet he desired to regard them principally as subservient to the higher purposes of his profession. Besides this, the philosophy of mind, in which he took extreme interest was then but little cultivated at Cambridge. Happily, however, the leading individuals in his congregation were very intelligent and well-informed able to appreciate his talents justly, and skilful in bringing his conversational powers into full action. With one or other of these he usually spent his evenings, selecting most frequently those who possessed the enjoyments of domestic life, and often stealing in earlier than he was expected, that he might for an hour share in the gambols and gayety of the children.

He was, but only for a short time, an imitator of Dr. Johnson. Some years afterward, when reminded of this, he replied, "Yes, sir: I aped Johnson, and I preached Johnson; and I am afraid with little more of evangelical sentiment than is to be found in his *Essays*: but it was youthful



folly, and it was very great folly. I might as well have attempted to daunce a horn-pipe in the cumbrous costume of Gog and Magog. My puny thoughts could not sustain the load of the words in which I tried to clothe them."

There needed not, in truth, the principle of imitation to produce great similarity in some important respects between these two extraordinary men. They manifested the physical difference between a melancholic and a cheerful temperament; in consequence of which, the one was slow and measured in utterance, the other rapid and urgent. But, in conversation, both evinced a ready comprehension of the whole subject, a quick and decisive accuracy in answering, and a perfect self-dependence. They both disliked a protracted debate, and would sometimes terminate a discussion, when it was growing tiresome, by a strong and pointed observation which it was difficult to encounter. Both were alike in exhibiting a rather more than ordinary degree of faith in things of a preternatural or mysterious description. In both too, there were the similarities of acute intellect united with splendid imagination; and of a natural majesty of mental and moral genius which commanded veneration. But in the correction of his faults, and the improvement of his virtues, Mr. Hall possessed, in his superior piety, an immense advantage over Dr. Johnson.

In argument he was impetuous, and sometimes overbearing; but if he lost his temper he was deeply humbled, and would often acknowledge himself to blame. On one of these occasions, when a discussion had become warm, and he had evinced unusual agitation, he suddenly closed the debate, quitted his seat, and, retiring to a remote part of the room, was overheard by a lady, who was just entering, to ejaculate with deep feeling, "Lamb of God! Lamb of God! calm my perturbed spirit!"

Mr. Hall's personal habits, not only at the time of which I am now speaking, but in a certain degree through life, though not precisely those of an absent man, were those of one whose mental occupations kept his thoughts at a distance from various matters of ordinary observance, and made him regardless of a thousand things which most persons never forget. Thus, on his return from an evening visit, if not watched, he would take a wrong hat or great-coat; if not sought after by some of the congregation, he would mistake the proper evening of a week-day service, having in such cases been so absorbed in study, as to lose a day in his reckoning; for the same reason, he often mistook the day or the hour of an appointment; when on any of his journeys to London he engaged

to take up the letters of his friends, it was not unusual, after his return, to find them all in his portmanteau, or in his great-coat pocket. These, or similar instances of forgetfulness, occurred daily; but, exciting the attention of his affectionate and watchful friends, they seldom exposed him to serious inconvenience.

None of these peculiarities sprang from an affectation of singularity; they simply marked an inattention to things of minor importance. Nor was there united with them a regardlessness of the proprieties of society, a disdain of such civilities and attentions as were usual in the classes with whom he most associated. He had never aimed to acquire a facility in the manners and habits of genteel life; but he had a native ease and grace, which was obviously distinguishable from any acquired habit. It was a grace that could neither be bought nor borrowed; on all proper occasions heightened by the dignity which naturally comported with his character and office; and uniformly blended with that genuine simplicity which often accompanies intellectual greatness, and is always, if I mistake not, an attribute of moral greatness.

Several particulars in the preceding account of Mr. Hall's first years at Cambridge will be illustrated by the following brief sketch, which I have received from a gentleman who had the most favorable opportunities, as well as the requisite taste and discrimination, for correctly estimating his character.

"I had but a slight acquaintance with Robert Hall from 1790 to 1793; from thence to the end of 1796 I knew him intimately. At that period his creed was imperfect, wanting the personality of the Holy Spirit, and wavering between the terrors of Calvin and the plausibilities of Baxter.\* His infirmities, which were increasing, he concealed with dexterity, opposed with vigor, and sustained with uncommon patience. In his ministerial situation he was far from easy; and he was vehemently severe upon Robinson for leaving his church a wilderness, and bequeathing his successor a bed of thorns.

"His religious conversation in company was not frequent, and for the most part doctrinal; but, in private, his experimental communications were in beauty, elevation, and compass beyond all I ever heard. The memory of a man of seventy-three will not afford particulars; and the general impression can neither be obliterated nor expressed.

"In his manners he was a close imitator of Dr. Johnson; fond of tea-table talk, and of the society of cultivated females, who

\* This phraseology will mark the bias of my truly respected correspondent.

had the taste to lend him an ear, and the ability requisite to make attention a favor. He has confessed to me the taking thirty cups of tea in an afternoon, and told me his method was to visit four families, and drink seven or eight cups at each.

"He knew, as well as any man, what bad men were, and what good men should be; yet was often wrong in his judgment of individuals. From this deficiency in the knowledge of mankind, he sometimes trusted his false and abused his true friends: when he perceived his error he changed his conduct, but, I suspect, very seldom confessed his mistake.

"He did not then read much; but was probably more hindered by pain than by indolence. A page, indeed, was to him more serviceable than a volume to many. Hints from reading or discourse, passing through his great mind, expanded into treatise and systems, until the adopted was lost in the begotten; so much so, that the whole appeared original. I am persuaded, however, that when I knew him he had not, by many degrees, attained his meridian. I should regret my incapacity to do him justice, and give you assistance, were I not persuaded that only the bud was exhibited to me, while the bloom and the fruit were reserved for those more deserving to be happy."

I had the privilege of becoming first known to Mr. Hall in January, 1797. During that year we dined daily at the same table: the next year we met almost every morning to read together: and for some years afterward scarcely a week passed in which I was not three or four times in his society. When I first became acquainted with him I was young, and ignorant of nearly every thing but the most rudimental knowledge of language and science; of which I possessed just enough to employ as instruments of inquiry. I was eager to acquire information; but ran some risk of turning my mind to that which was useless, or merely showy, instead of directing its best energy to that which was truly valuable. In such circumstances, to be allowed the friendship and enjoy the advice and assistance of such a man was among my richest blessings. Scarcely a thought worth preserving, scarcely a principle of action worth reducing to practice, scarcely a source of true enjoyment, but I derived from him, or I was led to receive, or to appreciate more correctly through his agency. If, then, for some pages, my name should occur more often in immediate association with that of my beloved and reverend friend than may seem consistent with ordinary rules, may I be freed from the charge of egotism? especially, if I assure the reader,

that while nothing affords me more pleasure, nothing awakens more gratitude to the Father of Mercies, then the retrospect of the intellectual and higher than intellectual delights which were then mine, few things more humble me than the conviction that though I enjoyed them so long, I suffered them to pass away without commensurate improvement.

Mr. Hall kindly admitted me to the privacy of his study, in addition to the advantage of frequent intercourse with him in the society of his friends. Desirous to assist others in forming their estimate of this extraordinary individual, I shall not merely speak of his character, habits, and pursuits, but occasionally introduce some of his conversational remarks; confining myself, however, to such as from their brevity always occur to my thoughts in the *ipsissima verba* originally employed. If I do not succeed in depicting the man, which indeed I feel conscious is far beyond my powers, I may at least attempt to describe him as he then appeared to me.

When I first saw Mr. Hall I was struck with his well-proportioned athletic figure, the unassuming dignity of his deportment, the winning frankness which marked all that he uttered, and the peculiarities of the most speaking countenance I ever contemplated, animated by eyes radiating with the brilliancy imparted to them by benevolence, wit, and intellectual energy. When he spoke, except in the most ordinary chit-chat, to which however he seldom descended, he seemed not merely to communicate his words, but himself: and I then first learned the difference between one who feels while he is speaking, and whose communicative features tell you that he does, and one who after he has spoken long and with apparent earnestness still does not feel. I then learned also, that though talents may convey their results to others, and activity may carry on others in its stream; yet there is something distinct in the structure of a great mind which never can be so transferred to another as to become its native characteristic. Mr. Hall had a buoyancy and playfulness when among his select friends, which were remarkably captivating. Among strangers there was a reserve for a short time, but it was soon shaken off, especially if he found that they were pious or intelligent. The presence of a man who gave himself airs of condescension usually induced him to remain silent or to retire. He could enjoy the society of men of moderate information; and it was interesting to observe how by a few apt questions he could ascertain in what direction their pursuits lay, and then so draw them out as to give them the pleasure of feeling that they were con-



tributing to *his* stock of that knowledge which they could not but think useful. He was eminently alive to the emotions of pity, an affection always calculated to inspire attachment, but which, in a man of abstract habits is, I fear, very unusual. He was generous by nature, as well as upon principle, and in seasons of affliction would remarkably identify himself with those who most needed sympathy. He rather avoided than sought expressions of thankfulness; and sometimes when he became oppressed by them would hastily say, "Thank you, thank you; you have said more than enough; remember, God has sent into the world a more powerful and more noble sentiment than even gratitude."

For some years he made it a rule to pay a pastoral visit to every member of his church once each quarter. He did the same also with regard to such of his ordinary hearers as he thought willing to receive him as a minister of religion. These were not calls, but *visits*, and usually paid on evenings, that he might meet the whole assembled family. Among the lower classes, to make them quite at their ease, he would sit down with them at supper; and that this might involve them in no extra expense, he took care they should all know that he preferred a basin of milk.\*

He persuaded the poorer members of his church to form little meetings, for reading, religious conversation, and prayer, going "from house to house." These were held once a fortnight, I think, in the summer time; once a week during the winter. He made it a point of official duty to attend them frequently; and regarded them, with the weekly meetings in the vestry, as the best thermometer for ascertaining the religious state of his people.

Proceeding thus, It was not surprising that he conciliated the affections of his friends, and secured the veneration of the pious; that he extended around him a growing conviction of his excellence, and carried on many in the stream of his mental and moral power.

In him all was at the utmost remove from gloom or moroseness. Even the railery in which he indulged showed his good-nature, and was exceedingly playful; and, notwithstanding the avowed and lamented impetuosity in argument to which he was prone, nothing, so far as I ever saw, but conceit, ingrafted upon stupidity,

provoked his impatience, and called forth a severity which he scarcely knew how to restrain.\* With regard to disposition, the predominant features were kindness and cheerfulness. He never deliberately gave pain to any one, except in those few extreme cases where there appeared a moral necessity of "rebuking sharply" for the good of the offender. His kindness to children, to servants, to the indigent, nay, to animals, was uniformly manifest. And such was his prevailing cheerfulness that he seemed to move and breathe in an atmosphere of hilarity, which indeed his countenance always indicated, except when the pain in his back affected his spirits, and caused his imagination to dwell upon the evils of Cambridgeshire scenery.

This was, in his case, far from a hypothetical grievance. It seriously diminished his happiness at Cambridge, and at length was the main cause of his quitting it. In one of my early interviews with him, before I had been a month at that place, he said to me, "What do you think of Cambridge, sir?" "It is a very interesting place." "Yes, the place where Bacon, and Barrow, and Newton studied, and where Jeremy Taylor was born, cannot but be *interesting*. But that is not what I mean; what do you say to the scenery, sir?" "Some of the public buildings are very striking, and the college walks very pleasing; but—" and there I hesitated: he immediately added, "But there is nothing else to be said. What do you think of the surrounding country, sir? Does not it strike you as very insipid?" "No, not precisely so." "Ay, ay: I had forgotten; you come from a flat country; yet you must love hills; there are no hills here." I replied, "Yes, there are; there are Madingley hill, and the Castle hill, and Gogmagog hill." This amused him exceedingly, and he said, "Why, as to Madingley, there is something in that; it reminds you of the Cottons, and the Cottonian Library; but that is not because Madingley is a high hill, but because Sir Robert Cotton was a great man; and even he was not born *there*. Then, as to your second example, do you know that the Castle hill is the place of the public executions? that is no very pleasant association sir; and as to your last example, Gogmagog hill is five miles off, and many who go

\* The poorer widows of his flock were not forgotten in these periodical visits. To them, he said, he repaired for religious instruction, and was seldom disappointed. On such occasions he selected his ever favorite repast of *tea*. It was his practice to carry tea and sugar with him, taking especial care that there should be more than could possibly be needed, and asking permission to leave the remainder behind him.

\* The following is an instance of his manner of checking inordinate vanity. A preacher of this character having delivered a sermon in Mr. Hall's hearing, pressed him, with a disgusting union of self-complacency and indelicacy, to state what he thought of the sermon. Mr. Hall remained silent for some time, hoping that his silence would be rightly interpreted; but this only caused the question to be pressed with greater earnestness. Mr. Hall, at length, said, "There was one very fine passage, sir." "I am rejoiced to hear you say so. Pray, sir, which was it?" "Why, sir, it was the passage from the pulpit into the vestry."

there are puzzled to say whether it is natural or artificial. 'Tis a dismally flat country, sir; dismally flat.\* Ely is twelve miles distant, but the road from Cambridge thither scarcely deviates twelve inches from the same level; and that's not very interesting. Before I came to Cambridge I had read in the prize poems, and in some other works of fancy, of 'the banks of the Cam,' of 'the sweetly flowing stream,' and so on; but when I arrived here I was sadly disappointed. When I first saw the river as I passed over King's College Bridge, I could not help exclaiming, Why, the stream is standing still to see people drown themselves! and that, I am sorry to say, is a permanent feeling with me." I questioned the correctness of this impression, but he immediately rejoined, "Shocking place for the spirits, sir; I wish you may not find it so; it must be the very focus of suicides. Were you ever at Bristol, sir? there is scenery, scenery worth looking upon, and worth thinking of; and so there is even at Aberdeen, with all its surrounding barrenness. The trees on the banks of the Don are as fine as those on the banks of the Cam; and the river is alive, sir; it falls over precipices, and foams and dashes, so as to invigorate and inspire those who witness it. The Don is *a river* sir, and the Severn is *a river*; but not even a poet would so designate the Cam, unless by an obvious figure he termed it the *sleeping river*."

The semi-playful and rapid manner in which he uttered things of this kind did not always conceal the deep feeling of incurable and growing dislike with which he was struggling.

When I first became known to Mr. Hall, he had recently determined to revise and extend his knowledge in every department "to re-arrange the whole furniture of his mind, and the economy of his habits," and to become a thorough student. He proposed devoting six hours a day to reading; but these, unless his friends sought after him, were often extended to eight or nine. He thought himself especially defective in a tasteful and critical acquaintance with the Greek poets; and said he should "once

\* On Mr. Hall's last visit to Cambridge, one of his friends took him out for a morning's ride, and showed him the improvements as to cultivation, by means of new enclosures, &c. "True," said he, "but still there is that odious flatness, that insipid sameness of scenery all around." Then, with a tone of great seriousness, he added, "I always say of my Cambridge friends, when I witness their contentedness in such a country, 'Herein is the faith and patience of the saints!' My faith and patience could not sustain me under it, with the unvarying kindness of my friends in addition."

On another morning ride his companion said, "Look at these fields, with the crops of corn so smooth and so abundant; are not they pleasant? and do they not excite the idea of plenty? He rejoined, with his usual promptness, "Oh! yes; and so does a large meal-tub filled to the brim. But I was not thinking of plenty, but of beauty."

more begin at the beginning." He set to work, therefore, upon the best treatises on the Greek metres then extant. He next read the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* twice over, critically; proceeded with equal care through nearly all the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides; and thence extended his classical reading in all directions. To the Latin and Greek poets, orators, historians, and philosophers he devoted a part of every day, for three or four years. He studied them as a scholar, but he studied them also as a moralist and a philosopher; so that, while he appreciated their peculiarities and beauties with his wonted taste, and carefully improved his style of writing and his tone of thinking, by the best models which they present, he suffered them not to deteriorate the accuracy of his judgment in comparing their value with that of the moderns. Perhaps, however, this assertion should be a little qualified: for, not only at the period of which I am now speaking, but, in great measure, through life, while he spoke of the Greek and Latin poetry in accordance with the sentiments and feelings of every competent classical scholar, he, with very few exceptions, unduly depreciated the poetry of the present times.

Much as he delighted in classical literature, he was by no means inclined, nor could he have reconciled it with his notions of duty, to circumscribe his reading within its limits. The early Christian fathers, the fathers of the Reformation, the theological writers, both puritan and episcopalian, of the seventeenth century, the most valuable authors on all similar topics down to the present time, including the most esteemed French preachers, were all perused with his characteristic avidity: what was most valuable in them became fixed in his unusually retentive memory; and numerous marginal and other references in the most valuable of his books prove at once the minuteness and closeness of his attention, and his desire to direct his memory to the substances of thought, and not unnecessarily to load it with mere apparatus.

Like many other men of letters, Mr. Hall, at this period, found the advantage of passing from one subject to another at short intervals, generally of about two hours: thus casting off the mental fatigue that one subject had occasioned by directing his attention to another, and thereby preserving the intellect in a state of elastic energy from the beginning to the end of time devoted daily to study.

Not long after he had entered upon this steady course of reading, he commenced the study of Hebrew, under Mr. Lyons, who then taught that language in the university. He soon became a thorough pro-



ficient in it; and, finding it greatly to increase his knowledge of the Old Testament, as well as of its relation to the New, and considerably to improve and enlarge the power of Scripture interpretation, he, from thence to the close of life, suffered scarcely a day to pass without reading a portion of the Old Testament in the original. This practice flowed naturally from one of his principles of action, namely, to go to the fountain-head for information, rather than to derive it from the streams; and from the continued application of that principle, it was found that his habit of reading originals often impaired the accuracy of his quotation of passages from our authorized version, having, in fact, become more familiar with the Hebrew and Greek texts than with any translation. This, which was often conjectured by some of his hearers at Cambridge, was amply confirmed by the subsequent observation of his intimate and much esteemed friend Mr. Ryley, at Leicester.

It would be useless to record, even briefly, Mr. Hall's opinions of the numerous authors, ancient and modern, which he read at this period with such close attention, since they accord generally with those of all men of correct taste and sound judgment. Yet perhaps I may state, with regard to his chief uninspired favorite among the Greek writers, that to none of the ornaments of pagan antiquity did he refer in such terms of fervid eulogy as to Plato. Not Cudworth himself could appreciate him more highly. He often expressed his astonishment at the neglect into which he apprehended the writings of Plato were sinking; and said, that an entire disregard of them would be an irreparable proof of a shallow age. Milton, he remarked, gave the noblest proofs, in his prose writings, of a knowledge and love of Plato; and he expressed a surprize, almost bordering upon contempt, in reference to those who classed this wonderful man with the schoolmen. It was his frequent remark that even when Plato wrote upon the most abstract subjects, whether moral, metaphysical, or mathematical, his style was as clear as the purest stream, and that his diction was deeply imbued with the poetic spirit. On occasions when he ran no risk of the charge of pedantry, he would, by appropriate quotations, confirm these views. He delighted to expatiate upon this philosopher's notions of vice and virtue, of idleness and industry; and often adduced the Platonic definition of education, as "that which qualifies men to be good citizens, and renders them fit to govern or to obey." On one occasion he pointed to a passage, in the first Republic, I think, from which it appeared that Plato perceived the advan-

tages resulting from the subdivision of labor, and suggested the natural progress of such subdivision in proportion to the advance of civilization.

In speaking of this philosopher, Mr. Hall illustrated his view of the evil of studying a Greek author with the aid of a Latin version by a reference to *Serranus's* magnificent edition of his works, in the Latin version, of which he said he had often detected errors. He also mentioned a ridiculous blunder of one of the English translators, who had, it seems, availed himself of a Latin version, in which, as was customary two or three hundred years ago, the omission of an *m* or an *n* was indicated by a bar placed over the preceding letter. Disregarding this superposed bar, the translator had read *hirudo* instead of *hirundo*, and thus, upon Plato's authority, declaring the *horse-leech*, instead of the *swallow*, to be the harbinger of the spring?

I have dwelt rather longer upon these topics than would be at all necessary, were it not to correct the notion which some persons have entertained, that Mr. Hall was indolent, and that though when stimulated to the effort, he would exert himself as a profound thinker, yet he was not a man of research, or, in the ordinary acception, a good scholar.

When Mr. Hall proposed that we should devote an hour every morning to reading together, he asked me to assist him in his mathematical studies, adding that as a matter of mutual advantage it might be well that on alternate mornings I should be his mathematical tutor, and he my instructor in metaphysics. To this proposal I gladly assented; and it has long been my persuasion that the scheme flowed in great measure from his desire to call my attention to general literature, and especially to the science of mind.

At that period, though he was strong and active, he often suffered extremely from the pain to which I have before adverted, and which was his sad companion through life. On entering his room to commence our reading, I could at once tell whether or not his night had been refreshing; for, if it had, I found him at the table, the books to be studied ready, and a vacant chair set for me. If his night had been restless, and the pain still continued, I found him lying on the sofa, or more frequently upon three chairs, on which he could obtain an easier position. At such seasons, scarcely ever did a complaint issue from his lips; but inviting me to take the sofa, our reading commenced. They however, who knew Mr. Hall can conjecture how often, if he became interested, he would raise himself from the chairs, utter

a few animated expressions, and then resume the favorite reclining posture. Sometimes, when he was suffering more than usual, he proposed a walk in the fields, where, with the appropriate book as our companion, we could pursue the subject. If he was the preceptor, as was commonly the case in these peripatetic lectures, he soon lost the sense of pain, and nearly as soon escaped from our author, whoever he might be, and expatiated at large upon some train of inquiry or explication which our course of reading had suggested. As his thoughts enkindled, both his steps and his words became quicker, until, ere long, it was difficult to say whether the body or the mind were brought most upon the stretch in keeping up with him. This peculiarity I have noticed in a few other men of vigorous intellect and lively imagination.

Mr. Hall's avowed object in recurring at all to his mathematical studies was, the acquisition of so much geometry, trigonometry, and conic sections as would enable him thoroughly to comprehend the entire scope of the reasoning in Maclaurin's "Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries." For this, indeed, his college studies had in a great measure prepared him; and there would have been but little to learn, could he have been satisfied to proceed as students often do. But it was not in his nature to advance, unless he ascertained the firmness of the ground at every step. He reasoned philosophically, for instance, upon the nature of ratios and proportions; so that we had to clear our way through the recondite lectures of Barrow relative to those points, before we could advance to trigonometry. His logical habits, also, made him very reluctant to pass over any geometrical proposition in which he could not trace the analysis as well as the synthesis. In this manner, and with such views, we went through the proposed course. Of what utility all this was ultimately to Mr. Hall I cannot precisely say; but I can testify that it was of permanent advantage by his mathematical preceptor, who had not previously formed the habit of tracing apparent results to their foundations; but who, from that period, pursued science with a new interest, kept his eye more steadily upon ultimate principles, and learned to value such researches quite as much for their intellectual discipline as for the practical benefit.\*

In reference to the philosophy of mind, after we had gone slightly over Locke's

Essay, his Conduct of the Understanding, and Watt's Ontology, which I have read before, we studied Berkeley, Wollaston, Hartley, Andrew Baxter, Reid, some portions of Bacon's Essays, and of his Treatise on the advancement of Learning; or rather, I should say, I had the advantage of learning what was most or least valuable in each and all of these, from this admirable living commentator. We were about to proceed to Search's (Abraham Tucker's) "Light of Nature,"\* when some circumstances, which I cannot recall to mind, rendered it inconvenient for us thus to meet, and brought these delightful readings and commentaries to a close. We did not then go through any of Dugald Stewart's works, Mr. Hall regarding him as an elegant expositor of Reid, but greatly inferior in originality. From Bacon's Essays he used to read passages aloud, with the warmest expressions of commendation.

I must not omit to specify, as a peculiarity in the structure of Mr. Hall's mind, that although in every important case he detected, and placed in the utmost prominence, an essential defect in the reasoning, at too rapid generalization, or any other unwarrantable deduction, that occurred in Berkeley, or Watts, or Hartley, he was very slow to perceive, very reluctant to admit, any such in the writings of Andrew Baxter. The reader who is conversant with such speculations will recollect, that in the second volume of Baxter's book on "the Soul," he affirms that our dreams are prompted by separate immaterial beings, and defends his theory with much ingenuity. As he advanced in Baxter's arguments, Mr. Hall exclaimed, "This is very beautiful, sir; yet I apprehend there must be some flaw in the reasoning." I suggested one or two objections; he showed immediately that they could not apply. On our next meeting he accosted me with, "Well, sir, have you detected any fallacy in Baxter's theory?" "Yes, I think I have." This, however, was soon disposed of, and then another and another. I at length referred to Dugald Stewart's theory, after examining which, he said, "I do not think this is tenable; but I suppose it must be admitted that Baxter does not quite make out his case. Yet he was a man of great acumen, why did the Scotch philosophers run him down so?"

tiated upon the imaginative as well as the rational process involved in the genesis of curves by motion, as taught by Barrow and Newton. The next day Dr. Hutten said to me, "What an extraordinary man that friend of yours is! Why, he was born to be a mathematician. If you could persuade him to give himself up to the sciences, as Priestley did, he would teach us all something."

\* Mr. Hall characterized this as a work in which the noblest philosophy was brought down by a master hand and placed within the reach of every man of sound understanding.

\* Shortly after my removal to Woolwich I invited my late valued friend Dr. Hutten to dine with Mr. Hall at my house. Mr. Hall, for the purpose of drawing the doctor into conversation, asked him a few questions suggested by some of Barrow's disquisitions in reference to mathematical measure, and its application to force, momentum, &c. They essentially involved the metaphysics of the subjects of inquiry. He also expa-



Still further to illustrate Mr. Hall's character, his turn of thought and expression, I will now bring together a few such incidents and short remarks, occurring between 1796 and 1803, as present themselves most vividly to my mind.

It will already have appeared that benevolence was a prevailing characteristic. When he had aided a poor man to the full extent of his own pecuniary means, he would sometimes apply to one of his affluent friends. "Poor —— is in great distress; some of his family are ill, and he cannot supply proper necessaries. Lend me five shillings for the poor fellow: I will pay you again in a fortnight, unless in the mean time you find that the case deserves your help, and then the donation shall become yours."

His disapprobation of avarice bore a natural relation to his own benevolence. Being informed that a rich man in the neighborhood, who was by no means celebrated for his liberality, had attended to a tale of distress without relieving it, he said, "Yes, sir: he would listen, but without inclining his head. He may lend a distant ear to the murmurings from the vale beneath, but he remains like a mountain covered with the perpetual snow."

On another occasion, a person talking to him of one whom they both knew, and who was very penurious, said, "Poor wretch! you might put his soul into a nutshell." "Yes, sir," Mr. Hall replied, "and even then it would creep out at a maggot hole."

His love of sincerity in words and actions was constantly apparent. Once, while he was spending an evening at the house of a friend, a lady who was there on a visit, retired, that her little girl, of four years old, might go to bed. She returned in about half an hour, and said to a lady near her, "She is gone to sleep. I put on my night-cap, and lay down by her, and she soon dropped off." Mr. Hall, who overheard this, said, "Excuse me, madam: do you wish your child to grow up a liar?" "Oh dear no, sir; I should be shocked at such a thing." "Then bear with me while I say, you must never *act* a lie before her: children are very quick observers, and soon learn that that which assumes to be what it is not is a lie, whether acted or spoken." This was uttered with a kindness which precluded offence, yet with a seriousness that could not be forgotten.

His dislike to compliments was thus expressed: "In compliments two and two *do not* make four; and twenty and twenty fall very far short of forty. Deal not then in that deceitful arithmetic."

It was said in Mr. Hall's hearing that "compliments were pleasing truths, and

flatteries pleasing untruths." He remarked "Neither of them are *pleasing* to a man of reflection, for the falsehoods in this case so nearly assume the semblance of truth, that one is perplexed to tell which is actually given; and no man is pleased with perplexity."

"You remember Mr. ——, sir." "Yes, very well." "Were you aware of his fondness for brandy and water?" "No." "It was a sad habit, but it grew out of his love of story telling; and that also is a bad habit, a very bad habit for a minister of the gospel. As he grew old, his animal spirits flagged, and his stories became defective in vivacity: he therefore took to brandy and water; weak enough it is true, at first, but soon nearly 'half-and-half.' Ere long he indulged the habit in a morning; and when he came to Cambridge he would call upon me, and before he had been with me five minutes ask for a little brandy and water, which was of course, to give him artificial spirits to render him agreeable in his visits to others. I felt great difficulty; for he, you know, sir, was much older than I was: yet, being persuaded that the ruin of his character, if not of his peace, was inevitable, unless something was done, I resolved upon one strong effort for his rescue. So the next time that he called, and, as usual, said, 'Friend Hall, I will thank you for a glass of brandy and water,' I replied, 'Call things by their right names, and you shall have as much as you please.' 'Why, don't I employ the right name! I ask for a glass of brandy and water.' 'That is the current, but not the appropriate name; ask for a *glass of liquid fire, and distilled damnation*, and you shall have a gallon.' Poor man, he turned pale, and for a moment seemed struggling with anger. But, knowing that I did not mean to insult him, he stretched out his hand, and said, 'Brother Hall, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.' From that time he ceased to take brandy and water."

In one of my early interviews with Mr. Hall, I used the word *felicity* three or four times in rather quick succession. He asked, "Why do you say *felicity*, sir? Happiness is a better word, more musical, and genuine English, coming from the Saxon." "Not more musical, I think, sir." "Yes, more musical, and so are words derived from the Saxon generally. Listen, sir: 'My heart is smitten and withered like grass;' there's plaintive music. Listen again sir: 'Under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice;' there's cheerful music." "Yes, but *rejoice* is French." "True, but all the rest is Saxon, and rejoice is almost out of tune with the other words. Listen again: 'Thou hast delivered my

eyes from tears, my soul from death, and my feet from falling; all Saxon, sir, except *delivered*. I could think of the word *tear*, sir, till I wept. Then again, for another noble specimen, and almost all good old Saxon-English: 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'"

Shortly after this I was reading the original edition of Doddridge's *Pneumatology*, and asked Mr. Hall to lend me Kippis's edition, in which the reference to other authorities, on the various topics discussed, are greatly increased. He told me that he did not possess Kippis's edition, in a tone which *then* surprized me a little, as it showed that he did not highly estimate Kippis's authority. I therefore asked, "Was not Dr. Kippis a clever man?" "He might be a very clever man, by nature, for aught I know, but he laid so many books upon his head that his brains could not move." This was to me, who, at that period, devoted much more time to reading than to thinking, an admirable lesson.

On being asked whether he was an Arminian or a Calvinist, he said: "Neither, sir, but I believe I recede farther from Arminianism than from Calvinism. If a man profess himself a decided Arminian, I infer from it that he is not a good logician; but, sir, it does not interfere with his personal piety; look at good Mr. Benson, for example. I regard the question more as metaphysical than religious."

A lady who had been speaking of the Supreme Being with great familiarity, but in religious phraseology, having retired, he said: "I wish I knew how to cure that good lady of her bad habit. I have tried, but as yet, in vain. It is a great mistake to affect this kind of familiarity with the King of kings, and speak of him as though he were a next-door neighbor, from the pretence of love." Mr. Boyle's well known habit was infinitely to be commended. And one of our old divines, I forget which, well remarks, that, 'Nothing but ignorance can be guilty of this boldness; that there is no divinity but in a humble fear, no philosophy but shows itself in silent admiration.'"

When two or three gentlemen were discussing the question, whether a man of no religion can be a successful minister of the gospel, surprise was expressed that Mr. Hall remained silent. "Sir, (said he, in reply,) I would not deny that a sermon from a bad man may sometimes do good; but the general question does not admit of an argument. Is it at all probable, that one who is a willing servant of Satan, (and that, you know, sir, is the hypothesis you assume,) will fight *against* him with

all his might, and if not, what *success* can be rationally expected?"

Mr. Hall did not permit his sedulous cultivation of the mind to draw him aside from the cultivation of the heart. The evidences were, indeed, very strong, that his preparation for ministerial duty was devotional as well as intellectual. Thus, his public services, by a striking gradation, for months and years, evinced an obvious growth, in mental power, in literary acquisition, and in the seriousness, affection and ardor of a man of piety. His usefulness and his popularity increased; the church and congregation became considerably augmented; and in 1798 it was found necessary to enlarge the place of worship to accommodate about two hundred more persons.

Early in the year 1799, a severe fever, which brought him, in his own apprehension, and that of his friends, to the brink of the grave, gave him an opportunity of experiencing the support yielded by the doctrines of the cross "in the near views of death and judgment." He "never before felt his mind so calm and happy." The impression was not only salutary, but abiding; and it again prompted him to the investigation of one or two points, with regard to which he had long felt himself floating in uncertainty. Although he had for some years steadily and earnestly enforced the necessity of divine influence in the transformation of character, and in perseverance in the course of consistent, holy obedience, yet he spoke of it as "the influence of the spirit of God," and never in express terms, as "the influence of the Holy Spirit." The reason was, that though he fully believed the necessity of spiritual agency in commencing and continuing the spiritual life, he doubted the doctrine of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. But about this time he was struck with the fact that, whenever in private prayer he was in the most deeply devotional frame, "most overwhelmed with the sense that he was nothing, and God was all in all," he always felt himself inclined to adopt a trinitarian doxology. This circumstance, occurring frequently, and more frequently meditated upon in a tone of honest and anxious inquiry, issued at length in a persuasion that the Holy Spirit is really and truly God, and not an emanation. It was not, however, until 1800, that he publicly included the personality of the Holy Spirit in his statements of the doctrine of spiritual influence.

In attempting to give some idea of the general character and style of Mr. Hall's public services, while I had the privilege of hearing him at Cambridge, I feel that I



shall neither adequately describe what his preaching really was, nor even do justice to my own conceptions of it.

His manner of reading the scriptures at the beginning of the service, was not generally interesting; nor did the portion read always bear an obvious reference to the text or subject afterwards brought forward. But when passages of scripture were quoted in the sermon, they were so delivered as to give to their true meaning the most intelligible prominence and force.

His prayers were remarkable for their simplicity and their devotional feeling. No person could listen to them without being persuaded that he who uttered them was really engaged in prayer, was holding communion with his God and Father in Christ Jesus. His tones and his countenance throughout these exercises were those of one most deeply imbued with a sense of his unworthiness, and throwing himself at the feet of the Great Eternal, conscious that he could present no claim for a single blessing, but the blood of atonement, yet animated by the cheering hope that the voice of that blood would prevail. The structure of these prayers never indicated any preconceived plan. They were the genuine effusions of a truly devotional spirit, animated by a vivid recollection of what in his own state, in that of the congregation, of the town and vicinity, needed most ardently to be laid before the Father of Mercies. Thus, they were remarkably comprehensive, and furnished a far greater variety on the successive occasions of public worship, than those of any other minister whom I have ever known. The portions which were devoted to intercession operated most happily in drawing the affections of his people towards himself; since they showed how completely his Christian sympathy had prepared him to make their respective cases his own.

The commencement of his sermons did not excite much expectation in strangers, except they were such as recollected how the mental agitation, produced by diffidence, characterized the first sentences of some of the orators of antiquity. He began with hesitation, and often in a very low and feeble tone, coughing frequently, as though he were oppressed by asthmatic obstructions. As he proceeded, his manner became easy, graceful, and at length highly impassioned; his voice also acquired more flexibility, body and sweetness, and in all his happier and more successful efforts, swelled into a stream of the most touching and impressive melody. The farther he advanced, the more spontaneous, natural, and free from labor, seemed the progression of thought. He announced the results

of the most extensive reading, of the most patient investigation, or of the profoundest thinking, with such unassuming simplicity, yet set them in such a position of obvious and lucid reality, that the auditors wondered how things so simple and manifest should have escaped them. Throughout his sermons he kept his subject thoroughly in view, and so incessantly brought forward new arguments, or new illustrations, to confirm or to explain it, that with him amplification was almost invariably accumulative in its tendency. One thought was succeeded by another, and that by another and another, each more weighty than the preceding, each more calculated to deepen and render permanent the ultimate impression. He could at pleasure adopt the unadorned, the ornamental, or the energetic; and indeed combine them in every diversity of modulation.

In his higher flights, what he said of Burke might, with the slightest deduction, be applied to himself, "that his imperial fancy laid all nature under tribute, and collected riches from every scene of the creation, and every walk of art;" and at the same time, that could be affirmed of Mr. Hall which could *not* be affirmed of Mr. Burke, that he never fatigued and oppressed by gaudy and superfluous imagery. Whenever the subject obviously justified it, he would yield the reins to an eloquence more diffusive and magnificent than the ordinary course of pulpit instruction seemed to require; yet so exquisite was his perception of beauty, and so sound his judgment, that not the coldest taste, provided it were real taste, could ever wish an image omitted which Mr. Hall had introduced. His inexhaustible variety augmented the general effect. The same images, the same illustrations, scarcely ever recurred. So ample were his stores, that repetition of every kind was usually avoided; while in his illustrations he would connect and contrast what was disjointed and opposed, or distinctly unfold what was abstracted or obscure, in such terms as were generally intelligible, not only to the well-informed, but to the meanest capacity. As he advanced to his practical applications, all his mental powers were shown in the most palpable but finely balanced exercise. His mind would, if I may so speak, collect itself and come forth with a luminous activity, proving, as he advanced, how vast, and, in some important senses, how next to irresistible, those powers were. In such seasons his preaching communicated universal animation: his congregation would seem to partake of his spirit, to think and feel as he did, to be fully influenced by the presence of the objects which he had placed before

them, fully actuated by the motives which he had enforced with such energy and pathos.

All was doubtless heightened by his singular rapidity of utterance; by the rhythmical structure of his sentences, calculated at once for the transmission of the most momentous truths, for the powers of his voice, and for the convenience of breathing freely at measured intervals; and, more than all, by the unequivocal earnestness and sincerity which pervaded the whole, and by the eloquence of his most speaking countenance and penetrating eye. In his sublimer strains, not only was every faculty of the soul enkindled and in entire operation, but his very features seemed fully to sympathize with the spirit, and to give out, nay, to *throw out*, thought and sentiment, and feeling.

From the commencement of his discourse an almost breathless silence prevailed, deeply impressive and solemnizing from its singular intenseness. Not a sound was heard but that of the preacher's voice; scarcely an eye but was fixed upon him; not a countenance that he did not watch, and read and interpret, as he surveyed them again and again with his rapid, ever-excursive glance. As he advanced and increased in animation, five or six of the auditors would be seen to rise and lean forward over the front of their pews, still keeping their eyes upon him. Some new or striking sentiment or expression would, in a few minutes cause others to rise in like manner: shortly afterwards still more, and so on, until, long before the close of the sermon, it often happened that a considerable portion of the congregation were seen standing; every eye directed to the preacher, yet now and then for a moment glancing from one to another, thus transmitting and reciprocating thought and feeling: Mr. Hall himself, though manifestly absorbed in his subject, conscious of the whole, receiving new animation from what he thus witnessed, reflecting it back upon those who were already alive to the inspiration, until all that were susceptible of thought and emotion seemed wound up to the utmost limit of elevation *on earth*; when he would close, and they reluctantly and slowly resume their seats.\*

\* Striking evidences of the most stimulating immediate impression often occurred. I specify only two examples.

In 1812, Mr. Hall, who then resided at Leicester, paid one of his periodical visits to Bristol, and, as usual, often preached at Broadmead. He delivered a most solemn and impressive sermon on the text "dead in trespasses and sins;" of which the concluding appeals were remarkably sublime and awful. The moment he had delivered the last sentence, Dr. Ryland, then the pastor of the church, hastened part of the way up the pulpit stairs, and while the tears trickled down his venerable face, exclaimed, with a vehemence which astonished both the preacher and the congregation; "Let all

Scenes like this I have witnessed repeatedly, so productive of intense and hallowed feeling, that, after an interval of more than thirty years, they present themselves to my mind with a more vivid influence than many of the transactions of the last month.

And surely the delightful retrospection may be safely indulged, when it is considered that these sublime exertions were made for the promotion of man's best interests; to warn the impenitent; to show to the sinner the fatal error of his way; to invite the self-condemned to the only, the all-effectual remedy; to console and encourage the faithful; to distribute the bread of life among those who must otherwise perish; to "build up the church in her most holy faith;" when it is known, also, that, while men of taste and intellect were both gratified and instructed, the uncultivated rustic heard, and understood, and received the Word of Life, and went on his way rejoicing.

Numerous and diversified as were the feelings excited by this extraordinary preacher, none were more prevailing than surprise that one so richly endowed should seem so utterly unconscious of it, and gratitude that the Great Head of the church should have called such a man to his service, and placed him in so important a station as Cambridge, when his intellectual powers were in their full maturity and vigor.

I must not, I perceive, allow myself to sketch the difference between his sermons and his expositions, or between his preaching at Cambridge and in the neighboring villages: nor must I dwell upon the weekly evening services, when he met a few of his people, chiefly of the poorer classes, in the vestry of his place of worship, and, in a strain of the most chaste and simple eloquence, comforted and instructed them in the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God."\* The diversity of his powers, the

that are alive in Jerusalem pray for the dead that they may live!"

In 1814, Mr. Hall, while preaching among his old friends at Cambridge, just before he commenced the application of his sermon, uttered a short, but very fervent ejaculatory prayer, during which the whole congregation arose from their seats. Mr. Hall seemed surprised for a moment, and but for a moment, and remained in prayer for about five minutes. He then resumed his sermon, and continued preaching for more than twenty minutes, in such a strain of magnificent and overwhelming eloquence, as the extraordinary incident might be expected to produce from powers and feelings like his, the whole congregation standing until the close of the sermon.

\* The topics of these evening lectures were often biographical. The lives and characters of Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Hannah, Samuel, Ruth, Daniel, &c. were briefly delineated, and made the basis of some useful practical reflections. Whenever the subject would fairly allow it, these reflections had an appropriate bearing upon the duties, the trials and perplexities, of persons in humble life. The sermon on "John fulfilled his course," inserted in the present volume, is very analogous in its character to the discourses to which I here refer: but its commencement is more elaborate.



sincerity of his character, the warmth of his love to God and man, were in all alike apparent: and no one that was not the victim of prejudice, or the slave of sin, could have seen him engaged in the service of God, without being ready to testify, "this man must have read much, thought much, and prayed much," to be thus admirably furnished for his great work.

It would be highly instructive and gratifying to know by what process so finished a preacher, so exquisite and tasteful a writer, as Mr. Hall, prepared his respective compositions for the pulpit and the press. But the reluctance with which he spoke either of himself or of his occupations, deprives us of much of this desirable information. At the time when our intercourse was most frequent and unrestrained, I have often been with him while he was preparing for the pulpit, and have occasionally ventured to ask him a few questions; his answers, always frank and elucidatory, however concise, enabled me, by means, also, of frequent reference to his notes on different sermons which I heard delivered, to form tolerably satisfactory conjectures as to the course pursued. He then stated, as he since has to different friends, that he never proceeded even to think of adopting a specific text, as fitted for a sermon, until the matter it presented stood out in the form of a particular, distinct, and precise topic: he could then take it up and lay it down as he pleased. Of his extraordinary power of abstraction I have already spoken. By its means he could, at pleasure, insulate, nay in a manner enclose himself, from every thing around him; and thus pursue his mental operations. It was usual with him to have five or six subjects under simultaneous training; to either of which he could direct his attention as inclination or necessity required. The grand divisions of thought, the heads of a sermon, for example, he would trace out with the most prominent lines of demarcation; and these for some years applied all the hints that he needed in the pulpit, except on extraordinary occasions. To these grand divisions he referred, and upon them suspended all the subordinate trains of thought.

The latter, again, appear to have been of two classes altogether distinct; outline trains of thought, and trains into which much of the detail was interwoven. In the outline train, the whole plan was carried out and completed as to the argument: in that of detail, the illustrations, images, and subordinate proofs, were selected and classified; and in those instances where the force of an argument, or the probable success of a general application, would mainly depend upon the language, even that was selected and appropriated, sometimes to the

precise collocation of the words. Of some sermons, no portions whatever were wrought out thus minutely; the language employed in preaching being that which spontaneously occurred at the time: of others, this minute attention was paid to the verbal structure of nearly half: of a few, the entire train of preparation, almost from the beginning to the end, extended to the very sentences. Yet the marked peculiarity consisted in this, that the process, even when thus directed to minutiae in his more elaborate efforts, did not require the use of the pen; at least at the time to which these remarks principally refer.\* For, Mr. Hall had a singular faculty for continuous mental composition, apart from the aid which writing supplies. Words were so disciplined to his use, that the more he thought on any subject, the more closely were the topics of thought associated with appropriate terms and phrases; and it was manifest that he had carefully disciplined his mind to this as an independent exercise, probably to avoid the pain and fatigue which always attended the process of writing. Whenever he pleased he could thus pursue the consecution to a great extent, in sentences, many of them perfectly formed and elaborately finished, as he went along, and easily called up again by memory, as occasion required; not, however, in their separate character, as elements of language, but because of their being fully worked into the substance of thought. It hence happened that the excellence which other persons often attain as to style, from the use of the pen, in written, visible composition (employing the eye upon words, instead of fixing the memory upon substantial mental product, and, it may be, diminishing the intellectual power by substituting for one of its faculties a mechanical result,) he more successfully and uniformly attained by a purely meditative process. And I am persuaded that if he could have *instantly* impressed his trains of thought upon paper, with the incorporated words, and with the living spirit in which they were conceived, hundreds if not thousands of passages would have been preserved, as chaste and polished in diction, as elastic and energetic in tone, as can be selected from any part of his works. What, however, could not thus be accomplished by the pen, has been achieved, as to immediate impression, in the pulpit; and hence

\* Mr. Hall, doubtless, varied his manner of preparation in different periods. For three or four years after his settlement at Leicester, he wrote down nearly a third of the sermon, and left all the rest to flow from the outline plan while he was preaching. But for some years afterwards he seldom allowed his notes to exceed two pages, and is thought to have indulged himself more than at any other period of his life in entirely extemporaneous eloquence. At that time his sermons were especially distinguished by simplicity and pathos.

his celebrity, unequalled, in modern times, as a sacred orator.

In preparing for the press the process was in many respects essentially different. There was, from the outset, a struggle to overcome the reluctance to write, arising from the anticipation of increased pain, which he knew must be endured so long as he was engaged in the mechanical act; and at every return to the labor he had a new reluctance to surmount. There was, moreover, the constant effort to restrain a mind naturally active, ardent, and rapid in all its movements, to a slow progression; nay, a farther effort, and, to a mind so constituted, a very irksome one, to bring the thoughts back from the ultimate issue to which they were incessantly hastening, and cause them to pass and repass, again and again, by a comparatively sluggish course, the successive links in a long chain. Nor was this all. He had formed for himself, as a writer, an ideal standard of excellence, which could not be reached;\* his perception of beauty in composition was so delicate and refined, that in regard to his own productions, it engendered perhaps a fastidious taste; and, deep and prevailing as was his humility, he was not insensible to the value of a high reputation, and therefore cautiously guarded against the risk of diminishing his usefulness among certain classes of readers, by consigning any production to the world that had not been thoroughly subjected to the *labor limæ*. Hence the extreme slowness with which he composed for the press; writing, improving, rejecting the improvement; seeking another, rejecting it; recasting whole sentences and pages; often recurring precisely to the original phraseology; and still oftener repenting, when it was too late, that he had not done so. All this he lamented as a serious defect, declaring that it gave, in his own view, to his written compositions, an air of stiffness and formality, which deprived him of all complacency in them. And I cannot but think that, notwithstanding the exquisite harmony and beauty which characterize every thing that he has published, they were, even in point of felicity of diction, and the majestic current and force of language, inferior to the "winged words" that escaped from his lips, when "his soul was enlarged" in the discharge of ministerial duty.

May we not suggest a probable reason for this, by observing, that when Mr. Hall stood forth as the minister of the sanctuary, he placed the fire upon the altar in the humble confidence that it would be kept alive by the communication of grace and

spirit from on high; but that, when he came before the public as an author, he sometimes extinguished his own flame, pure and ethereal as it notwithstanding was, in his efforts to ornament the vase in which he held it up to view.\*

But I must not dwell longer on these topics.

In the beginning of the year 1799, Mr. Hall had the happiness of renewing personal intercourse with his early friend, Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Mackintosh, being about to deliver a course of lectures on the Law of Nature and Nations, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, deemed it expedient, for the completion of some of the extensive researches which that important undertaking required, to reside for a few months at Cambridge, that he might consult the more valuable of the college libraries, as well as the public library belonging to the university generally. Another distinguished individual, the late Dr. Samuel Parr, spent several weeks at Cambridge at the same time, for the purpose of visiting some of his old friends, of associating with Mr. Mackintosh, and of becoming personally acquainted with Mr. Hall, whose character he had long known and highly valued. Mr. Hall, pleased to refresh his spirits in the society of his beloved fellow-student, and by no means unwilling to glean something from the stores of so profound a scholar as Dr. Parr, often spent his evenings with these two eminent men, and a few members of the university, who were invited to their select parties, and with whom, from that time, he cultivated an intimacy.

This circumstance led to the formation of Mr. Hall's most inveterate habit; that of smoking. Previously to this period he had always censured the practice in the strongest terms; but, on associating with Dr. Parr, his aversion to what he used to denominate an "odious custom," soon passed away. The Doctor was always enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke, from sun-rise until midnight; and no person could remain in his company long without great inconvenience, unless he learnt to smoke in self-defence. Mr. Hall, therefore, made the attempt, and quickly overcame every obstacle. I well recollect entering his apartment just as he had acquired this happy art; and, seeing him sit at ease, the smoke rising above his head in lurid, spiral volumes, he inhaling and apparently enjoying its fragrance, I could not suppress my

\* "I am tormented with the desire of writing better than I can."

\* That Mr. Hall did not always require much time for the production of elegant and spirited writing, interspersed with passages of remarkable beauty, and of the most elaborate polish, is plain from his two earliest publications, both composed *currente calamo*, and each yielding as powerful and finished specimens of style and thought as can be drawn from his works.



astonishment. "O sir, (said he) I am only qualifying myself for the society of a Doctor of Divinity; and this, holding up the pipe, is my test of admission."

Mr. Hall's Cambridge friends were divided in their feelings and wishes with regard to this new practice. The majority approved it, from a belief that the narcotic influence of tobacco would mitigate the pain which he had so long endured. Others, apprehending that his habit of converting *every thing* into a source of enjoyment would transform him into an unremitting smoker, and that injury to his health would ensue, ventured to expostulate with him. I belonged to the latter class, and put into his hands Dr. Adam Clarke's pamphlet on "The Use and Abuse of Tobacco," with a request that he would read it. In a few days he returned it, and at once, as if to preclude discussion, said, "Thank you, sir, for Adam Clarke's pamphlet. I can't refute his arguments, and I can't give up smoking."

We now approach the time when Mr. Hall acquired a signal extension of celebrity. Many who had hailed the French Revolution of 1789 as an event productive of extensive benefit, were compelled to admit, after a few years, that the great leaders in that Revolution, and still more their followers, committed grievous blunders, and grosser crimes, from the want of higher than political principles to control their actions. Yet, in the false security which some felt, and others insidiously aimed to inspire, it was suspected by but few, that much of our periodical literature, had under the plea of encouraging free discussion, become irreligious in its tendency, and that various unprincipled demagogues in London and the large manufacturing towns, not only held up to admiration the conduct of the detestable actors in "the reign of terror," but were constantly exerting themselves to disseminate democracy and atheism conjointly. Such, however, was the fact. From 1795 to 1799, debating rooms were opened in various parts of the metropolis, in which the most barefaced infidelity was taught, and to which the lower classes were invited, often on Sunday evenings, by a variety of specious allurements. Mr. Hall was no sooner aware of the existence of these sources of evil, and of the mischief they produced, than he began to use the voice of warning, in his private intercourse among his people, and to impress upon such of the young as he feared had received a sceptical bias, that of all fanaticism the fanaticism of infidelity then prevalent was at once the most preposterous and the most destructive.

Mr. Hall's persuasion of the continuance and growth of this infidel spirit, induced

him to preach and publish his celebrated sermon on "Modern Infidelity;" which was not, therefore, as many affirmed, a hasty production, written under excited feelings and false alarms, but the deliberate result of a confirmed belief, that the most strenuous efforts were required to repel mischief so awfully and insidiously diffused.

Before the publication of this sermon, its author had fully "counted the cost" as to the obloquy which it would bring upon him from various quarters; but he did not at all anticipate its extraordinary success, and the corresponding extension of his reputation. As repeated editions were called for, he yielded his assent with great hesitation, from a fear that the copies would remain unsold; and he was the last to see, what every one else perceived, that it had carried his celebrity as a profound thinker and eloquent writer far beyond the limits of the denomination to which he was so bright an ornament.

Immediately after this sermon issued from the press, the consistency and integrity of the author were vehemently attacked in several letters which appeared in the "Cambridge Intelligencer," then a popular and widely circulated newspaper. Its editor, Mr. Flower, had received in an ill spirit Mr. Hall's advice that he would repress the violent tone of his political disquisitions, and had, from other causes which need not now be developed, become much disposed to misinterpret his motives and depreciate his character. He, therefore, managed to keep alive the controversy for some months, occasionally aiding, by his own remarks, those of his correspondents who opposed Mr. Hall, and as often casting illiberal insinuations upon the individual who had stepped forward in defence of the sermon and its author. A few months after this discussion subsided, Mr. Flower, who had been summoned before the house of lords, and imprisoned in Newgate for a libel on Bishop Watson, published an exculpatory pamphlet; in which, with a view to draw the attention of the public as speedily as possible from his own unmanly and disingenuous conduct, while at the bar of the house, he soon passed from his personal defence to a virulent attack upon Mr. Hall, his former pastor.

Shortly afterwards, another controvertist, a Mr. Anthony Robinson, unwilling that Mr. Flower and his coadjutors should gather all the laurels in so noble a conflict, hastened into the field; and, it must be admitted, left them far behind. He published, in a pamphlet of more than sixty pages, "An Examination" of Mr. Hall's Sermon. He did not bring against the preacher the positive charge of apostacy

having discrimination enough to see that it was one thing to refer the atrocities of the reign of terror to the political principles of the perpetrators, and quite another to ascribe them to their avowed and unblushing atheism. But the crimes that he imputed to Mr. Hall, were, that he was "an imitator of Mr. Burke," that he was "fierce and even savage in expression," that his "charges against atheism are unfounded," and "that he taught that it was excusable, if not meritorious, to punish men for errors in religious opinions." For himself, he maintained, that "all men are essentially alike in moral conduct;" that the sum of all the morality of religionists is, "do good unto the household of faith, and to them only; kill, plunder, calumniate the heretics;" that "all public religions are opposed to all private morality;" that "atheism (on the contrary) tends but little to alter our moral sentiments;" and that "all religions except the belief that rewards are to be conferred upon the beneficent, and for that service exclusively, are not merely as bad, but infinitely worse than any kind or degree of scepticism;" because "atheism leaves every human present motive in full force, whilst every religion or mode of faith different from what is above expressed, changes the name and the nature of morality, saps the foundation of all benevolence, and introduces malice, hostility and murder, under the pretext of love to God." This being a fair specimen of the shameless impiety with which the press then teemed, we need not wonder at the applauses bestowed upon Mr. Hall for advancing with such singular talent and ability to stem the torrent.

With the exception of a few letters from private friends, who disapproved of his denominating the Roman Catholic clergy "the Christian priesthood," every communication he received was highly gratifying, especially as it did justice to his motives. The most distinguished members of the university were loud in his praises: numerous passages in the sermon which were profound in reasoning, or touching and beautiful in expression, were read and eulogized in every college and almost every company; and the whole composition was recommended in the charges and sermons of the dignified and other clergy in terms of the warmest praise. The "Monthly Review" (then the leading critical journal) the "British Critic," (at that time) under the able superintendence of Dr. Nares, and other reviews, gave to the sermon the highest commendation. Kett in his "Elements of General Knowledge," William Belsham in his "History of Great Britain," Dr. Parr in the notes to his celebrated "Spital Sermon," and many others, were

profuse in their expressions of panegyric. From that time Mr. Hall's reputation was placed upon an eminence, which it will probably retain as long as purity and elevation of style, deeply philosophical views of the springs and motives of action, and correct theological sentiments, are duly appreciated in the world.\*

Of the letters received by Mr. Hall on this occasion, the following from the pen of his friend Mackintosh, has escaped the ravages of time.

"*Serle St. Lincoln's Inn, 26 March, 1800.*

"DEAR HALL,

"FROM the enclosed letter, you will see the opinion which the Bishop of London† has formed of your sermon, and you will observe that he does some justice to your merit. Mr. Archdeacon Eaton, to whom the letter was written, has allowed me to send it to you; and I thought it might not be disagreeable to you to have it, as the opinion of a man, not indeed of very vigorous understanding, but an elegant writer, a man of taste and virtue, not to mention his high station in the church.

"I last night had a conversation about the sermon with a man of much greater talents, at a place where theological, or even literary discussions, are seldom heard. It was with Mr. Windham, at the Duchess of Gordon's rout. I asked him whether he had read it. He told me that he had, that he recommended it to every body; and, among others, on that very day, to the new Bishop of Bangor, who had dined with him. He said that he was exceedingly struck with the style, but still more with the matter. He particularly praised the passage on vanity as an admirable commentary on Mr. Burke's observations on vanity in his character of Rousseau. He did not like it the worse, he said, for being taken from the source of all good, as he considered Mr. Burke's works to be. He thought, however, that you had carried your attack on vanity rather too far. He had recommended the sermon to Lord Grenville, who seemed sceptical about any thing good coming from the pastor of a

\* On the publication of Dr. Parr's "Spital Sermon," I took a copy of it to Mr. Hall: and sat down at his table while he hastily turned over the leaves. He was greatly amused by the cursory examination, but had evidently no expectation that any of the notes referred to himself. "What a profusion of Greek, sir! Why, if I were to write so, they would call me a pedant, but it is all natural in Parr." "What a strange medley, sir. The gowmsmen will call him *Farrago Parr*." At length I saw his eye glance upon the notes which relate to himself. His countenance underwent the most rapid changes, indicating surprise, regret, and pity: in a very few minutes he threw down the book, and exclaimed, "Poor man! poor man! I am very sorry for him! He is certainly insane, sir! Where were his friends, sir! Was there nobody to sift the folly out of his notes, and prevent its publication? Poor man!"

† Dr. Fortescue. This enclosure is not now extant.



Baptist congregation, especially at Cambridge.

"This, you see, is the unhappy impression which Priestley has made, and which, if you proceed as you have so nobly begun, you will assuredly efface. But you will never do all the good which it is in your power to do, unless you assert your own importance, and call to mind that, as the dissenters have no man comparable to you, it is your province to guide them, and not to be guided by their ignorance and bigotry. I am almost sorry you thought any apology due to those senseless bigots who blamed you for compassion [towards] the clergy of France, as innocent sufferers and as martyrs of the Christian faith during the most barbarous persecution that has fallen upon Christianity, perhaps since its origin, but certainly since its establishment by Constantine. \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* I own I thought well of Horsley when I found him, in his charge, call these unhappy men "our Christian brethren:" the bishops and clergy of the persecuted church of France! This is the language of truth. This is the spirit of Christianity.

"I met with a combination in Ovid, the other day, which would have suited your sermon. Speaking of the human descendants of the giants, he says:

*"Sed et illa propago  
Contemptrix superum, sævæque avidissima cædis  
Et violenta fuit. Scires e sanguine notos."*  
*Mét. l. 160.*

"The union of ferocity with irreligion is agreeable to your reasoning.

"I am going to send copies of my third edition\* to Paley and Watson, to Fox and the Lord Chancellor.† I should like to send copies of your sermon with them. If you will direct six copies to be sent here, I shall distribute them in such a manner as will, I think, not be hurtful.

"Mrs. Mackintosh joins me in the most kind and respectful remembrance. Believe me ever,

"Dear Hall,

"Your affectionate friend,

"JAMES MACKINTOSH."

Mr. Mackintosh continued to evince both the steadiness of his friendship for Hall, and the high value which he set upon this sermon, by frequently quoting it and applying it to the elucidation of the Lectures which he was then delivering in Lincoln's Inn. Several of his auditors were, in consequence, induced sometimes to spend their Sundays at Cambridge, that they might listen to the pulpit instructions

of the individual of whom they had heard so much. Many also of the members of the university, including not merely undergraduates, but college fellows and tutors, were often seen at the Baptist place of worship. These sometimes amounted to fifty or sixty: and a few of them attended so constantly upon the afternoon services, that they became almost regarded as regular hearers. Among the latter, some have since become distinguished men, and occupy important stations either in the church or in the public service, as statesmen or senators.

The attendance of so many university students upon the services of a dissenting minister, at length began to excite alarm among the "Heads of Houses;" of whom a meeting was summoned to consider the expediency of interposing some authoritative measure to prevent this irregularity. But Dr. Mansel, then master of the largest college, Trinity, and afterwards bishop of Bristol, "declared that he could not be a party in such a measure: he admired and revered Mr. Hall, both for his talents and for his genuine liberality; he had ascertained that his preaching was not that of a partisan, but of an enlightened minister of Christ; and that therefore if he were not the master of Trinity he should certainly often attend himself; and that even now he had experienced a severe struggle before he could make up his mind to relinquish so great a benefit." Shortly after this he personally thanked Mr. Hall, not only for his sermon, but for his general efforts in the Christian cause; and, through the medium of a common friend, endeavored to induce him to enter the established church. This, I believe, was the only *direct* attempt to persuade Mr. Hall to conform.

None of these circumstances were permitted to draw Mr. Hall aside from his ordinary course. His studies, his public duties, his pastoral visits, were each assigned their natural place, as before. If there were any change, it was manifest in his increased watchfulness over himself; and, perhaps, in giving a *rather* more critical complexion than before to certain portions of his morning expositions, and in always concluding them with such strong practical appeals as might be suited to a congregation of mixed character.

If I do not greatly mistake, however, his sentiments with regard to controversy in general were considerably modified from this period. The language of the preface to his sermon, on the advantages of union, became the language of his heart and conduct; so that he abstained from public discussions except on questions that seemed of vital importance, either in regard to

\* Of the Discourse on the Study of the Law of Nature and Nations.

† The Earl of Roesslyn.

fundamental truth, or the essential privileges of Christians. Having learnt that one of the severest trials of human virtue is the trial of controversy, he resolved, on occasions when silence became inexpedient or censurable, not to repel even injustice and misrepresentation in an angry spirit. Thus when he undertook the refutation of Bishop Horsley's charge, that village preachers among methodists and dissenters were teachers of insubordination and sedition, indignant as he doubtless felt at so unjust an insinuation, he opposed it in a manner as remarkable for the conciliatory spirit which it exhibits, as for the singular train of original thought and cogent argument which runs through that interesting fragment.

In little more than two years after the publication of the sermon on Modern Infidelity, Mr. Hall again appeared before the public as an author. The transient peace of Amiens was celebrated by a general thanksgiving throughout England, on the 1st of June 1802. In the sermon preached by Mr. Hall on that occasion, he endeavored first to awaken the gratitude of his auditors by a most touching picture of the horrors of war, from which Europe had just escaped: and then to apply the gratitude so excited, to acts of benevolence. I have already adverted to Mr. Hall's reasons for preaching that sermon *memoriter*, without deviation from his own written copy. I recur to it for a moment merely to state, that though it was delivered with the most impressive dignity, and with less rapidity than that to which he usually yielded himself, yet, in one or two parts, he obviously felt great difficulty in checking his inclination either to modify his language, or to expatiate more at large. This was especially observable at the passage commencing with "Conceive but for a moment the consternation which the approach of an invading army would impress on the peaceful villages in this neighborhood." He mentioned afterwards that the struggle between his desire to correct what, he just then saw, was "a confusion in the grouping," and his determination "not to deviate from his lesson," was such as rendered it almost impossible for him to proceed. To this kind of perplexity he never again exposed himself.

The nation had scarcely tasted the blessings of peace, when a dispute on one of the articles of the treaty of Amiens involved us in a fresh war with the French. Buonaparte, then first consul, aware of the British ascendancy at sea, resolved first to attack our continental dominions. He also seized on the persons and property of the numerous English who had visited France during the brief interval of peace, detain-

ing them as prisoners of war; and then menaced this country with invasion. So strange, and in some respects, so atrocious a commencement of hostilities, had a singular effect in melting down dissension, and diffusing a spirit of almost unexampled unanimity, among all ranks and classes of the community. To adopt Mr. Hall's emphatic language: "It was a struggle for existence, not for empire. It must surely be regarded as a happy circumstance that the contest did not take this shape at an earlier period, while many were deceived by certain specious pretences of liberty into a favorable opinion of our enemy's designs. The popular delusion had passed; the most unexampled prodigies of guilt had dispelled it; and, after a series of rapine and cruelty, *had torn from every heart the last fibres of mistaken partiality.*" At this momentous period Mr. Hall's love of his country was again signally evinced. On the fast day, 19th October 1803, he preached at Bristol, where he was then on a visit, a sermon afterwards published; "The Sentiments proper to the Present Crisis," which had the happiest effect in enkindling the flame of generous, active patriotism.

This sermon, perhaps, excited more general admiration than any of the author's former productions; on account of its masterly exposure of prevailing errors, its original and philosophical defence of some momentous truths, and its remarkable appropriateness to the exigencies of the crisis. The last ten pages were thought by many (and by Mr. Pitt among the number) to be fully equal in genuine eloquence to any passage of the same length that can be selected from either ancient or modern orators. They were re-printed in various periodical publications, and widely circulated in every direction; and they evidently suggested some of the finest thoughts in Sir James Mackintosh's splendid defence of Peltier, the editor of *L'Ambigu*, who was tried in London for a libel on Buonaparte.

In an old manuscript of Mr. Hall's, containing outline notes of sermons preached by him in 1801, 1802, and 1803, scarcely any of them occupying more than two pages, there are inserted the first rude sketch of this valuable sermon, and, at the distance of several pages, a few hints of thoughts and sentences designed to be introduced near the close.

"1. Particulars in which our notions are wrong, or 'we speak not aright,' with regard to national judgments.

"1. Political speculations on the secondary causes of our calamities, exclusive of a regard to the hand of God.

"2. Wanton and indiscriminate censure of the conduct of our rulers.



"We are permitted within . . . limits to animadvert on the measures of government.

"3. A confidence in an arm of flesh.

"Cursed is man, &c.

"4. A reliance on our supposed superior virtue.

"5. General lamentations on the corruptions of the age.

"Right sentiments. An acknowledgment of the justice and dominion of God.

"Sincere confession of our sins. Dan. ix. 8. Zech. x. 11, &c."

Such was the original synopsis. The hints intended to be worked in towards the close of the sermon, are as below.

"Eternal God! (O thou) who hast at once declared thyself the God of peace and the Lord of hosts, go forth with our armies and shelter (shield) their heads in the day of battle: give them (endow them with) that undaunted courage, that . . . from trouble which springs from a sense of thy presence.

"Under thy conduct, and fighting under thy banners, we will employ all the resources which lie within our reach, . . . without trusting in an arm of flesh . . . while we behold with the eye of faith, what thy prophet discerned in ancient times, the plains filled with horses of fire and chariots of fire.

"There is surely not one person here who will tempt himself to . . . by the fear of death, when he reflects that, in the failure of this great enterprise, should the crisis arrive, he must feel a thousand deaths in the extinction of religion, in the spoliation of property, in the violation of chastity, in the confusion of all orders . . . when all that is noble or holy, will be trampled upon . . . when death would be sought with the avidity of . . . when the enemies' triumphs will be felt in . . . mourn . . . freedom entombed."

I have here presented the incipient germs of thought and expression, in this extraordinary production, from a persuasion that the man of research into the operations of intellect, will be deeply interested on comparing them with their finished result.

On looking back upon the preceding pages, I perceive that I have laid myself open to the charge of dwelling too long upon that portion of Mr. Hall's life during which I also resided at Cambridge. Let me simply observe, then, that it was the portion in which his fine character assumed, by the means I have been tracing, its true place in public estimation; and that I may be forgiven, if I have thus dwelt upon that bright period of my own existence, in which I was open to the constant influence of association with one so pre-eminent in mental

and moral excellence. Yet I am not disposed to allow the interesting memory of a long friendship to interfere with biographical fidelity. I have spoken of Mr. Hall's richer qualities agreeably to the estimate I then formed, but with a conviction that they had not at that period reached their full maturity and vigor. I shall now advert to a few of his defects, but with an equally strong persuasion that they diminished as his age, and judgment, and piety advanced.

I have already remarked, that Mr. Hall was impetuous in argument. I must here add, that he sometimes contended more for victory than for truth. I never knew him voluntarily take what he believed to be the wrong side of an argument, for the sake of showing how adroitly he could carry on the advocacy of any opinions which he, for the moment, took the fancy to maintain; but, if ever he precipitated himself into the assertion of erroneous sentiment, he would strenuously defend his opinion; and, on such occasions, would seem more pleased with perplexing and confounding his opponents, than with faithfully endeavoring to set either them or himself right. This habit was very much restrained, if not altogether overcome, in the latter part of his life. Be it observed, however, that at no time did it tempt him to trifle with the sanctities of religion.

Besides this yielding to the temptation of making the matter of truth and error a prize for contest, there was another thing which, in social life, depreciated the *practical* value of his great ability, namely, a random carelessness in throwing out opinions and estimates of subjects, books, or men. Many of those opinions were graphically correct, and highly valuable, and they were usually clothed in an aphoristic terseness of language; yet, were too often such, that plain, credulous listeners for instruction, regarding him as an oracle, would leave him incorrect and fallacious notions of the topics on which he had spoken; and would, therefore, be strangely perplexed two or three weeks afterwards, on hearing, or hearing reported, contrary opinions on the same subjects stated by him subsequently, when farther investigation had corrected his judgment. Sometimes, too, especially when indulging in panegyric, he would, even in conversation, give himself up to the feelings of the orator, and allow his fancy to escape into the *ideal*, sketching the picture then existing in his own thoughts, rather than that of the individual whom he imagined himself describing.

It was also much to be regretted, that when in company, he did not keep habitually in view the good which his great tal-

ents and high character qualified him to impart. His conversation, though always conveying information on the various subjects generally brought forward in cultivated society, did not indicate the prevailing purpose of leading the minds of others in a right direction. Or, if he entered society with this determination, he frequently permitted the circumstances into which he was thrown, to divert him from his purpose: thus giving away his admirable conversational powers to the mere casual train of topics, many of them trivial in interest. There could not but be various acute remarks, and every now and then a piece of valuable disquisition, or a most important sentiment, or an eloquent flow of striking observations; yet there was not a systematic bearing towards positive utility. Often, indeed, has Mr. Hall lamented this defect: often, as we have been returning from a party which he had kept alive by the brilliancy and variety of his observations, has he said, "Ah! sir, I have again contributed to the loss of an evening, as to every thing truly valuable: go home with me, that we may spend at least one hour in a manner which becomes us."

It should be added, however, that it was only in larger parties that this occurred. I never spent an evening with him alone, or with the addition of one or two select companions, in which the sublimer purposes of religious, as well as intellectual intercourse, were not prevailingly kept in view.

In adverting to the deficiencies in Mr. Hall's character, I must farther remark, that he did not always seem adequately alive to *special* modes and efforts of utility. There were times when his apparent indifference must have been thought scarcely compatible with his uniform benevolence and piety, unless by those who were thoroughly aware that his infirmities often compelled him to avoid active exertions, except those which fell within the range of ministerial duty; yet, at other seasons, he exerted himself so powerfully and successfully in favor of some grand object, as, in great measure, to compensate for his habituality avoiding the ordinary detail of minor operations.

His defects, on whatever occasions they showed themselves, were as remote as possible from littleness, and were such as would be most naturally found in a noble character. We may hence learn, however, that a man, though far enriched above his fellows with intellectual and spiritual endowments, still manifests the frailties of a fallen being; and that it always behoves us, therefore, with Christian discrimination, to distinguish between grace and nature; to give to God his own glory, and to refer to men their own infirmities.

But I must return from this digression.

During the early months of the year 1803, the pain in Mr. Hall's back increased, both in intensity and continuity; depriving him almost always of refreshing sleep, and depressing his spirits to an unusual degree. On one of his visits to Kettering and its neighborhood, he consulted Dr. Kerr, of Northampton, who recommended him to reside a few miles from Cambridge, and to have recourse to horse exercise. In consequence of this advice, he took a house at Shelford, a village about five miles from Cambridge; and the frequent and short journeys on horseback which thus became necessary for a season, seemed beneficial. Yet, the advantage was not of long continuance. He missed his delightful evenings spent in the society of the intelligent classes of the congregation (of whom there was a much higher proportion than in most congregations,) and he missed still more, the simple, heart-refreshing remarks of the poor of his flock, whose pious converse had always been peculiarly soothing to his mind. It is true, he there enjoyed intercourse with two excellent men, both of whom he cordially esteemed, Mr. James Nutter, a valuable member of his church at Cambridge, and the Rev. Thomas Thomason, afterwards one of the East-India Company's chaplains at Calcutta. With these friends he sometimes spent his evenings; and in company with the latter, who was Mr. Simeon's curate at Trinity church, he frequently rode to Cambridge on the Sunday mornings: these brothers in the gospel ministry proceeding thus pleasantly, "in the unity of the Spirit," to their respective spheres of labor in the church of God. Gratifying, however, as this intercourse was, both to Mr. Hall and his valued neighbors, it still left him too much alone, and too much exposed to all the morbid influences of a disordered body, and of a mind overstrained. Often has he been known to sit close at his reading, or yet more intensely engaged in abstract thought, for more than twelve hours in the day; so that, when one or both of his kind friends have called upon him, in the hope of drawing him from his solitude, they have found him in such a state of nervous excitement, as led them to unite their efforts in persuading him to take some mild narcotic, and retire to rest. The painful result may be anticipated. This noble mind lost its equilibrium; and he who had so long been the theme of universal admiration, now became the subject of as extensive a sympathy. This event occurred in November 1804. Mr. Hall was placed under the care of Dr. Arnold, of Leicester, whose attention, with the blessing of God, in about two months, restored him both to mental and bodily health.

During this afflictive suspension of his



pastoral duties, his church and congregation gave the most unequivocal proofs that they had caught somewhat of his generous and exalted spirit, and that they were desirous to conduce to his welfare in temporal things, in acknowledgment of the spiritual blessings he had been the means of conveying to them. They set on foot a subscription, to which themselves contributed most liberally, and which, by the aid of other friends, became sufficient to produce, besides a life annuity of one hundred pounds, a farther sum nearly equal, vested in government securities; the latter to be at his own disposal at death: each sum being properly vested in trustees.

In April 1805, he resumed his ministerial functions at Cambridge: but, it being deemed inexpedient for him to re-occupy his house at Shelford, he engaged another at Foulmire, about nine miles from Cambridge. This spot, doubtless, was unwisely selected; as his opportunities of social intercourse with old and intimate friends were almost entirely cut off, and he was thus left to feed more upon his own thoughts than in any preceding part of his life. The evil did not show itself in his public ministrations, which were regarded as more devout, intellectual, and impressive, than they had ever been; nor in any diminution of relish for works in which genius stood forth in defence of religious truth; as his exquisite critique upon Foster's Essays, written at this period, amply evinces. But the evils resulting from solitude and a return of his old pain with more than its usual severity, ere long began to show themselves. Sleepless nights, habitual exclusion from society, a complete self-absorption, and the incessant struggle between what was due to a church and congregation which had given such signal proofs of affection for him, and what he felt to be necessary for his own preservation, a speedy removal from air and scenery that more and more impaired his health and oppressed his spirits: these, at about twelve months after his former attack at Shelford, produced a recurrence of the same malady, which again laid him aside from public duty.

He soon, however, recovered the complete balance of his mental powers, under the judicious care of the late Dr. Cox, of Fish Ponds, near Bristol. It was regarded as essential to the permanent possession of mental health and vigor, that he should resign the pastoral office at Cambridge, that he should, for a year, at least, seek retirement in a spot selected and cordially approved by himself, abstain from preaching, and as far as possible, avoid all strong excitement.

Pursuant to this advice, he sent in his letter of resignation. Thus terminated a

connection which had subsisted for fifteen years, and had been of great benefit to Mr. Hall's character; while, by the divine blessing upon his labors, it had transformed a society that was rapidly sinking under the influence of cold, or disputatious speculators, into a flourishing church and congregation, "bringing forth the fruits of righteousness," and shining in the lustre of a consistent Christian profession. It is pleasing to remark that the attachment on both sides remained undiminished until Mr. Hall's death.

On recovering from this attack, he received a letter from his old friend Sir James Mackintosh, then Recorder of Bombay, which was written soon after Sir James had heard of his first indisposition. It is highly interesting, both as a memorial of genuine friendship, and as a beautiful exhibition of elevated and delicate sentiment. My insertion of it will not, however, be regarded as a proof that I entirely adopt the *theory* which the writer so elegantly sketched.

"Bombay, Sept. 21, 1805.

"MY DEAR HALL,

"I believe that, in the hurry of leaving England, I did not answer the letter which you wrote to me in December 1803. I did not, however, forget your interesting young friend, from whom I have had one letter from Constantinople, and to whom I have twice written at Cairo, where he now is. No request of *yours* could, indeed, be lightly esteemed by me.

"It happened to me a few days ago, in drawing up (merely for my own use) a short sketch of my life, that I had occasion to give a faithful statement of my recollection of the circumstances of my first acquaintance with you. On the most impartial survey of my early life, I could see nothing which tended so much to excite and invigorate my understanding, and to direct it towards high, though, perhaps, scarcely accessible objects, as my intimacy with you. Five and twenty years are now past since we first met; yet hardly any thing has occurred since, which has left a deeper or more agreeable impression on my mind. I now remember the extraordinary union of brilliant fancy with acute intellect which would have excited more admiration than it has done, if it had been dedicated to the amusement of the great and the learned, instead of being consecrated to the far more noble office of consoling, instructing, and reforming the poor and the forgotten.

"It was then too early for me to discover that extreme purity, which in a mind pre-occupied with the low realities of life, would have been no natural companion of so much

activity and ardor, but which thoroughly detached you from the world, and made you the inhabitant of regions where alone it is possible to be always active without impurity, and where the ardor of your sensibility had unbounded scope amidst the inexhaustible combinations of beauty and excellence.

"It is not given to us to preserve an exact medium. Nothing is so difficult as to decide how much ideal models ought to be combined with experience; how much of the future should be let into the present, in the progress of the human mind. To ennoble and purify, without raising us above the sphere of our usefulness; to qualify us for what we ought to seek, without unfitting us for that to which we must submit; are great and difficult problems, which can be but imperfectly solved.

"It is certain the child may be too manly, not only for his present enjoyments, but for his future prospects. Perhaps, my good friend, you have fallen into this error of superior natures. From this error has, I think, arisen that calamity with which it has pleased Providence to visit you, which, to a mind less fortified by reason and religion, I should not dare to mention, but which I really consider in you as little more than the indignant struggles of a pure mind with the low realities which surround it; the fervent aspirations after regions more congenial to it; and a momentary blindness, produced by the fixed contemplation of objects too bright for human vision. I may say, in this case, in a far grander sense than that in which the words were originally spoken by our great poet,

"And yet  
"The light which led astray was light from heaven."

"On your return to us, you must surely have found consolation in the only terrestrial produce which is pure and truly exquisite; in the affections and attachments you have inspired, which you were most worthy to inspire, and which no human pollution can rob of their heavenly nature. If I were to prosecute the reflections, and indulge the feelings, which at this moment fill my mind, I should soon venture to doubt, whether, for a calamity derived from such a source, and attended with such consolations, I should so far yield to the views and opinions of men, as to seek to condole with you. But I check myself, and I exhort you, my most worthy friend, to check your best propensities, for the sake of attaining their object. You cannot live *for* men without living *with* them. Serve God then by the active service of men. Contemplate more the good you *can* do, than the evil you can only lament. Allow yourself to see the loveliness of virtue amidst

all its imperfections; and employ your moral imagination, not so much by bringing it into contrast with the model of ideal perfection, as in gently blending some of the fainter colors of the latter with the brighter hues of real experienced excellence; thus heightening their beauty, instead of broadening the shade which must surround us till we awaken from this dream in other spheres of existence.

"My habits of life have not been favorable to this train of meditation. I have been too busy or too trifling. My nature perhaps would have been better consulted, if I had been placed in a *quieter* station, where speculation might have been my business, and visions of the fair and good my chief recreation. When I approach you, I feel a powerful attraction towards this which seems the natural destiny of my mind; but habit opposes obstacles, and duty calls me off, and reason frowns on him who wastes that reflection on a destiny independent of him, which he ought to reserve for actions of which he is the master.

"In another letter I may write to you on miscellaneous subjects; at present I cannot bring my mind to speak of them. Let me hear from you soon and often.

"Farewell, my dear friend.

"Yours ever most faithfully,

"JAMES MACKINTOSH."

Two visitations of so humiliating a calamity within the compass of a year deeply affected Mr. Hall's mind. Happily, however, for himself and for the world, his spirits soon recovered their wonted tone; and the permanent impression on his character was exclusively religious. His own decided persuasion was, that, however vivid his convictions of religious truth, and of the necessity of a consistent course of evangelical obedience had formerly been, and however correct his doctrinal sentiments during the last four or five years, yet that he did not undergo a thorough transformation of character, a complete renewal of his heart and affections, until the first of these seizures. Some of his Cambridge friends, who visited him at Shelford, previously to his removal to Dr. Arnold's and witnessed his deep prostration of soul while he read the fifty-first psalm, and made each verse the subject of penitent confession and of a distinct prayer, were rather inclined to concur with him as to the correctness of the opinion. Be this, however, as it may (and the wonderful revelations of "the great day" can alone remove the doubt,) there can be no question that from this period he seemed more to live under the prevailing recollection of his entire dependence upon God, that his habits were more devotional



than they had ever before been, his exercises more fervent and more elevated.

In a letter written to his friend Mr. Phillips, of Clapham, after his recovery, he thus adverts to his afflictions:

"I cannot look back upon the events which have befallen me, without admiration and gratitude. I am a monument of the goodness and of the severity of God. My sufferings have been extreme, and the kindness of God, in interposing in my behalf, unspeakable. Pray for me, my dear friend, that I may retain an indelible sense of the mercies received, and that the inconceivable afflictions I have undergone may 'work for me the peaceable fruits of righteousness.' I am often afraid lest it should be with me as with the ancient Israelites, who, after they had sung the praises of God, 'soon forgot his works.' O! that a life so signally redeemed from destruction, may be as signally employed in that which is alone the true end of life, the service of God. But my heart is 'like a deceitful bow,' continually prone to turn aside; so that nothing but the powerful impulse of divine grace can fix it in a right aim."

At this time, I believe, Mr. Hall, under the persuasion to which I have just alluded, made a solemn dedication of himself to God, renewing the act annually on the recurrence of his birth-day. One of these touching and impressive records, which has been found among his papers, will, I feel assured, be read with deep interest.

"AN ACT OF SOLEMN DEDICATION OF MYSELF TO GOD.

"O Lord, thou that searchest the heart and triest the reins of the children of men, be thou the witness of what I am now about, in the strength of thy grace, to attempt: that grace I humbly and earnestly implore, to give validity and effect to that act of solemn engagement of myself to thy service, on which I am about to enter. 'Thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are none of them hid from thee.' 'I was born in sin, and in iniquity did my mother conceive me.' I am an apostate, guilty branch of an apostate guilty root, and my life has been a series of rebellions and transgressions, in which I have walked 'according to the course of this world; according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' How shall I confess my transgressions before thee; what numbers can reach; what words can adequately express them! '*My iniquities have increased over my head, and my transgressions have grown up unto Heaven.*' O Lord, I esteem it a wonderful mercy that I have not long since been cut off in the midst of my sins, and been sent

to hell before I had an opportunity or a heart to repent. Being assured from the word of God of thy gracious and merciful nature, and of thy willingness to pardon and accept penitent believing sinners on the ground of the blood and righteousness of thine own adorable Son, 'who died, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God,' and that 'him that cometh to him he will in nowise cast out,' I do most humbly prostrate myself at the footstool of his cross, and through him enter into thy covenant. I disclaim all right to myself from henceforth, to my soul, my body, my time, my health, my reputation, my talents, or any thing that belongs to me. I confess myself to be the property of the glorious Redeemer, as one whom I humbly hope he has redeemed by his blood to be part of 'the first fruits of his creatures.'

"I do most cheerfully and cordially receive him in all his offices, as my priest, my prophet, and my king. I dedicate myself to him, to serve, love and trust in him as my life and my salvation to my life's end.

"I renounce the Devil and all his works, the flesh and the world, with heartfelt regret that I should have been enslaved by them so long. I do solemnly and deliberately take thee to be my full and satisfying good, and eternal portion in and through thine adorable Son the Redeemer, and by the assistance of the blessed Spirit of all grace, the third person in the triune God, whom I take to be my sanctifier, and comforter to the end of time, and through a happy eternity, praying that the Holy Spirit may deign to take perpetual possession of my heart and fix his abode there.

"I do most solemnly devote and give up myself to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, agreeably to the terms of the Gospel Covenant, and in humble expectation of the blessings it ascertains to sincere believers. I call thee to witness, O God! the truth and reality of this surrender of all I have, and all I am, to thee; and, conscious of the unspeakable deceitfulness of my heart, I humbly and earnestly implore the influence of thy Spirit to enable me to stand steadfast in this covenant, as well as an interest in the blood of the Son, that I may be forgiven in those instances (alas! that such an idea should be possible,) in which I may, in any degree, swerve from it.

"Done this [2d] day of May 1809, seven o'clock in the evening, Leicester.

"ROBERT HALL."

Mr. Hall, on his removal from Dr. Cox's, spent some months among his relatives and friends in Leicestershire. At Arnsby he retraced the scenes of his youth, often

visited the grave-yard, which would naturally awaken many interesting recollections of his early life, and on these occasions he has more than once been seen kneeling at his father's grave, engaged in earnest prayer. He afterward resided, for a time, at Enderby, a pleasant and sequestered village, five miles from Leicester, where, by the united influence of calm retirement and gentle spontaneous occupation he gradually regained his bodily health, with great mental tranquility, and a renewed capacity for usefulness in the church.

His friends Dr. Ryland and Mr. Fuller, persuaded of the benefits that would flow from drawing his attention to a specific object, requested him to investigate the critical peculiarities of some difficult texts in the New Testament, respecting which Dr. Marshman had asked the opinion of his friends in England. This judicious application directed his thoughts to some of his old and favorite inquiries, and produced the most salutary effects.\* From this he passed to other literary occupations, thence to closer biblical study, and, in due time, when his strength and self-possession were adequately restored to permit the exertion without injury, he returned to the delightful work of "proclaiming the good tidings of peace."

He first preached in some of the villages around him; and then, occasionally, to a small congregation assembling at a chapel in Harvey-lane, Leicester, which had several years before been under the care of that eminent man Dr. Carey, now of Serampore. The congregation had been diminishing for some years, and at this time did not exceed two hundred and fifty: the church consisted of seventy-six members. After having preached to them a few months, he accepted an invitation to become their stated pastor; and his ministerial labors were soon followed by tokens of good. "The people," said he in a letter to Dr. Ryland, "are a simple-hearted, affectionate, praying people, to whom I preach with more pleasure than to the more refined audience at Cambridge. We have had, through mercy, some small addition, and hope for more. Our meetings in general, our prayer-meetings in particular, are well attended."

With this church he continued connected nearly twenty years. The church and congregation steadily increased during that

long interval, and scarcely any thing of moment occurred to interrupt their internal peace. The place of worship, which when Mr. Hall first settled there would not conveniently hold four hundred persons, was enlarged in 1809 for the reception of about eight hundred; and in 1817 a second enlargement rendered it capable of accommodating a thousand persons. In 1826, at the close of Mr. Hall's labors there, the place was comfortably filled, and the members of the church, besides those who it is believed had gone to their eternal reward, amounted to nearly three hundred. More than a hundred of those who constituted the evening congregation were pious members of the Church of England.

In the autumn of 1807 Mr. Hall removed from Enderby to a house in Leicester, which he engaged partly that he might more conveniently associate with the people of his charge, and partly in anticipation of his marriage, which took place in March, 1808. This event gave great and sincere satisfaction to his old and intimate friends, most of whom had long regretted that one so evidently formed for domestic enjoyments should for so many years have lived without attaining them; and had no doubt, indeed, that an earlier marriage would, by checking his propensity to incessant retirement and mental abstraction, have preserved him from the heavy afflictions which had befallen him. As Mrs. Hall still lives to mourn the loss of her incomparable husband, I must not permit myself more than to testify how highly he estimated her kindness and affection, and how often, in his conversation, as well as in his letters, he expressed his gratitude to God for giving him so pious, prudent, and devoted a wife. Of their five children, three daughters and one son survive. Another son died in 1814.

Mr. Hall's residence at Leicester was not only of longer continuance than at any other place, but I doubt not that it was the period in which he was most happy, active, and useful. His domestic comfort at once contributed to a more uniform flow of spirits than he had for some time experienced, and greatly to the regularity of his habits. The increase both of attentive hearers and of the number among them who were admitted to church-fellowship, supplied constant reason for encouragement and thankfulness. He was also within the reach of ministers and others, of different persuasions, men of decided piety, and some of them of considerable attainments, who knew how to appreciate the extraordinary advantages of frequent intercourse with such an individual; thus yielding him the delight of an interchange of soul and sentiment, besides that fruit of friendship so apt-

\* For more than two years he employed much time in a critical examination of the New Testament, and in arranging such corrected translations as he deemed important, with short reasons for his deviating from the authorized version; intending to publish the whole in a pamphlet of about one hundred pages. Just as he had finished this work, he for the first time saw Macknight's new Translation of the Apostolic Epistles; and finding himself anticipated in many of the corrections which he thought most valuable, destroyed his manuscript.



ly characterized by Lord Bacon: "Who-soever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarity and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another, he tosseth his thoughts more easily, he marshalleth them more orderly, he seeth how they look when they are turned into words, and he waxeth wiser than himself, often more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation."<sup>\*</sup>

Leicester, from its situation in the heart of the midland counties, as well as from its importance in a leading inland manufacture, was the centre of influence and operation to a considerable distance around; and the concurrence of many favorable circumstances had rendered it the centre also of a religious influence, and of religious operations, diffusing themselves incessantly with a new and growing impulse. To this the zeal and activity of the late Rev. Thomas Robinson of Leicester, and of Mr. Hall's father, had greatly contributed; and many clergymen and dissenting ministers in Leicestershire and the neighboring counties, were, in their respective fields of labor, instrumental in producing the most cheering and successful results. The attention of the Christian world had been recently invited, or, I might perhaps say, *summoned*, to promote the noble objects of missionary societies, Bible societies, Sunday and other schools for the instruction of the poor; and the summons had been obeyed in a universality and cordiality of vigorous Christian effort, and in a spirit of conciliation and harmony, such as the world had not yet known. Placed in the midst of so extensive a sphere of benevolent and sacred influence, Mr. Hall was soon roused to a measure of activity and a diversity of employment to which he had hitherto been a stranger. The Bible Society at Leicester, missionary societies there and all around, asked and received his aid; and these, with the different public services of frequent occurrence among orthodox dissenters, gave occasion to the happiest exercise of his varied powers.

His religious character thus became correctly estimated by a much larger portion of the community. Instead of being known

chiefly to men of reading and taste, as an author who had appeared before the world on a few momentous occasions, and, after a striking exhibition of intellectual and moral energy, had hastened back to his retirement, he now became much more known and revered as the correct and eloquent interpreter of the Christian faith, the intrepid assertor of its infinite superiority to all human systems of philosophy or morals. Long had he been admired by the intelligent as a great man; the circumstances in which he now moved with so much philanthropic ardor caused him to be regarded, not merely by these, but by pious men of every persuasion, as a good man, rejoicing to consecrate his best faculties to the specific objects of the Christian ministry, and such purposes of enlarged exertion as were fully compatible with his holy calling.

Nor were these efforts, and this high estimate of their value, confined to the field of activity he thus occupied. He had, on quitting Bristol in 1791, consented to spend a few weeks with his friends there every two years. He had also made a similar arrangement for visiting Cambridge, where the members of his former congregation had peculiar claims upon him. Although his invariable dread of notoriety, and, his dislike of the bustle of the metropolis caused his visits there to be "few and far between," yet they occurred sufficiently often to excite almost universally the highest admiration of his singular qualities as a preacher, and convince many who previously had contemplated the evangelical system of religion with great disrelish that it was the *only* foundation of elevated morality, and that its cordial adoption was not necessarily repugnant to genius, learning, and intellectual cultivation.

Wherever he went, he was called to address overflowing congregations, and commonly of a remarkable mixed character. Churchmen and dissenters; men of rank and influence, individuals in lower stations; men of simple piety, and others of deep theological knowledge; men who admired Christianity as a beautiful system, and those who received it into the heart of faith; men in doubt, others involved in unbelief: all resorted to the place where he was announced as the preacher. Frequently he was apprized of this peculiarity in the structure of the auditory, and whenever that was the case, the striking appropriation of the sermon to the assembly was always manifest.\*

\* Mr. Hall, however, from the midway position of Leicester, between London and the large towns in Lancashire and Yorkshire, was much exposed to interruptions. (See p. 252.) Many persons who had but a slight acquaintance with him would invariably spend a day at Leicester in their way from London to Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, &c., or from either of those places to London, that they might, during the greater part of it, enjoy his society; and, though he often felt this to be a real annoyance, yet such was his feeling of what was due to strangers in point of courtesy, that it was not until he had sustained the inconvenience for almost twenty years that he would consent that this class of visitors should be informed he would not be at leisure to see them until evening.

\* While this sheet was going through the press, I accidentally found among some old letters one from a friend residing in France, in which there was the following allusion to Mr. Hall by a French Protestant clergyman, who was visiting Bristol, in September, 1822. In a letter addressed to another Protestant minister, Mr. Kerpezdron, of Aulnay, he says,

"I heard Mr. Robert Hall of Leicester last Tuesday morning; but his sermon was so great, so good, so elo-

Mr. Hall's writings during his residence at Leicester, though by no means numerous, tended greatly to augment his influence upon society.

The first of these was published anonymously in the *Eclectic Review*, but left no room for hesitation as to its author. It was a critique upon a pamphlet entitled "Zeal without Innovation," which he undertook at the earnest entreaty of the late Mr. Robinson of Leicester, "who, in common with all the serious clergy in those parts, disapproved the pamphlet highly." As it is no part of my intention to present elaborate accounts of Mr. Hall's successive publications, it may suffice for me to remark with regard to this critique, that while it places the controversy between the puritans and their opponents in a flood of light, and exhibits the essential importance of religious liberty to the growth, if not in some cases to the existence, of genuine, devotional Christianity; it presents a more admirable picture of the character of the evangelical clergy,\* a more powerful, liberal and successful defence of their object and conduct, than has been, as yet, accomplished by any other person. Many regard it as among the most instructive and useful, as well as among the most masterly, of Mr. Hall's productions. It abounds in keen satire, in irrefragable argument, in touching description, in tasteful imagery, in exquisite diction, and in sentiments of a weight and worth only to be fully estimated by men whose minds are elevated above the prejudices which tie us down to sects and parties, and can rejoice at the extension of true religion among persons of any persuasion, or through the instrumentality of whomsoever the great Head of the church may enjoy. The value set by the public upon this disquisition was evinced in the rapid sale of three editions in a separate pamphlet, independently of its circulation in the *Review*.

Of the sermons published by Mr. Hall during his residence at Leicester, the first was preached in behalf of the Sunday-school connected with his own congregation, and appeared under the title of "The Advantages of knowledge to the Lower Classes." The subject is not precisely adapted to the decorations of eloquence; for the deplorable effects of ignorance and the blessings of knowledge are best exhibited in the detail of facts, which admit of no embellishment. Mr. Hall's desire to enlarge the capacity for enjoyment among the lower classes, as well as to promote their highest welfare,

tempted him, however, to enter this region of commonplaces, and thus gave a fresh opportunity of showing how an original thinker can communicate an air of freshness to a worn-out topic, bring up to the surface arguments and illustrations that lie far below the reach of ordinary reasoners, and enforce them with a warmth and energy calculated equally to impress and to convince.\*

The next two sermons are of a much higher order. One of them, on "The Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister," was addressed to the Rev. James Robertson, on his ordination over the Independent Church at Stretton, Warwickshire; the other, which portrays the duties, discouragements, and supports "of the Christian Missionary," was addressed to the Rev. Eustace Carey, on his designation as a missionary to India. In these the author traces with a master hand the various sources of discouragement and consolation which appertain to the respective offices of the minister and the missionary. Like one intimately acquainted with comparative anatomy, he exhibits the points of agreement as well as those of diversity, in the different subjects, with the most convincing discriminations; while conversant as well with the morbid as the healthy anatomy of the subjects before him, he explores to its inmost recess that universal moral disease which calls forth the efforts of both ministers and missionaries, and then (where the analogy must drop) he reveals the principles and the origin of an infallible cure. Both these addresses are remarkable for their originality and variety; every topic successively advanced is irradiated with eloquence, and glows with feeling; and so skilfully are both the discourses conducted, that while they are avowedly directed to the minister and the missionary, and abound in the most valuable instructions to them respectively, the private Christian, who reads with devout attention, may derive from them as rich instruction for himself, and as many directions for his own religious improvement, as though they were specifically addressed to him alone. This, indeed, was a decided characteristic of Mr. Hall's sermons. He who heard, or he who read, would find his as-

† This sermon, as well as his two able pamphlets on the "Framework Knitters' Fund," and in "Reply to Cobbett and others" should be regarded as flowing entirely from his benevolence. This, with him, had never been a fleeting sentiment in occasional operation, but one that was permanently fed by Christian principles. It was, however, greatly extended, to adopt his own language, "by those impressions of tenderness, gratitude, and sympathy which the endearments of domestic life supply," and led him to investigate the actual circumstances, of the neighboring poor, and constantly to aim at the alleviation of their distress. Not long after his marriage when his own pecuniary resources were much restricted, he proposed to fast on certain days, that he might have it in his power to distribute more among the needy; and he thought it wrong to have more than two coats when so many persons around him were clothed in mere rags.

quent, so simple, so pious, in a word, so complete a piece of pulpit oratory, that I cannot tell you any thing about it except that it has made an indelible impression on my mind. I thought when I came out that I never could preach again."

\* I use this term to avoid a periphrasis, and because it is intelligible and strictly characteristic.



tonishment and admiration strongly excited; but often, if not always, the more his emotion was enkindled by the preacher, the more forcibly was he compelled to retire to "the chambers of imagery," and examine his own heart.

The sudden and untimely death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, was an event calculated to make the deepest impression upon a mind constituted like Mr. Hall's. The illustrious rank of the victim, her youth and recent marriage, the affecting nature of the catastrophe, its probable influence upon the reigning monarch, upon the succession to the throne, and the welfare of the nation even to distant ages; all presented themselves to his thoughts with the most heart-stirring energy. He preached three sermons on the occasion, of which many of the auditors affirm the one published was by no means the best. It, however, by universal acknowledgment, bore the palm above all the numerous valuable sermons that were then published. It embraces the various topics that would occur to a man of piety, feeling, and excursive thought, on the contemplation of such an event, the mysteriousness of God's providence, the vicissitudes of empires, the aggravated poignancy of sudden calamity to individuals of elevated station, "the uncertainty of life, the frailty of youth, the evanescence of beauty, the nothingness of worldly greatness," the blindness of man to futurity, "the human race itself withering" away, and the perpetuity of God's promises as the great and noble contrast to universal fragility; these are touched in succession with the utmost tenderness, beauty, and sublimity. In felicity of diction, in delicacy and pathos, in the rich variety of most exquisite and instructive trains of thought, in their cogent application to truths of the utmost moment, in the masterly combination of what in eloquence, philosophy, and religion was best calculated to make a permanent and salutary impression, this sermon probably stands unrivalled.

Besides the various sermons and reviews which he wrote and published during his residence at Leicester, he composed for circulation among the associated Baptist churches in the counties of Northampton, Leicester, and Warwick, two tracts, *On the Work of the Holy Spirit*, and *On Hearing the Word*; both deeply imbued with simple evangelical truth, and rich in excellent practical remarks, fitted for the beneficial perusal of all classes. There were also other compositions which he executed with singular felicity. I mean his biographical sketches. They are, except the rapid but exquisite sketches of Brainerd, Fletcher of Madeley, and Henry Martyn, the delineations of a friend; and perhaps, in a few partic-

ulars, need a slight allowance for the high coloring to which the warmth of friendship tempts us when meditating upon departed excellence; yet they are, on the whole, exact in the resemblance, and finely exemplify the author's varied powers, especially his delicate and accurate discrimination of the degrees and shades of human character.

One of these, the character of the Rev. John Sutcliff, is an unfinished portrait; Mr. Hall, after a few unsatisfactory trials, relinquishing the attempt. The following letter to Mr. Fuller, on the occasion of this failure will be read with interest, as an example both of his diffidence and of his sense of the obligation of a promise.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"I am truly concerned to tell you that I cannot succeed at all in my attempts to draw the character of our dear and venerable brother Sutcliff. I have made several efforts, and have sketched, as well as I could, the outlines of what I conceive to be his character; but have failed in producing such a portrait as appears to me fit for the public eye. I am perfectly convinced that your intimacy with him, and your powers of discrimination, will enable you to present to posterity a much juster and more impressive idea of him than I can. I am heartily sorry I promised it. But promises I hold sacred; and therefore, if you insist upon it, and are not willing to release me from my engagement, I will accomplish the task as well as I can. But if you will let the matter pass *sub silentio*, without reproaching me, you will oblige me considerably. It appears to me that, if I ever possessed a faculty of character-drawing, I have lost it, probably for want of use; as I am far from taking any delight in a minute criticism on character, to which, in my younger days, I was excessively addicted. Both our tastes and talents change with the progress of years. The purport of these lines, however, is to request you to absolve me from my promise, in which light I shall interpret your silence; holding myself ready, however, to comply with your injunctions.

"I am, my dear sir,

"Your affectionate brother,

"Sep. 1814.

"R HALL."

For several years, about this time, Mr. Hall's thoughts were greatly occupied upon the subject of "Terms of Communion." His first publication in reference to it appeared in 1815: but they who were admitted to his intimacy will recollect how often, three or four years before its appearance, he advocated a cautious revision of the practice of nearly all churches; and how successfully he refuted the arguments of those

who favored any narrow system of exclusion. He regarded the existence of a principle which made so many churches points of repulsion instead of centres of union as a very serious evil; and often deplored it in language similar to that which commences his first production on the subject.

The discussion, indeed, is neither of slight nor of temporary interest. It involves the prevailing practice of every church in Christendom, whether established or independent of an establishment; and it includes an answer to the inquiry how purity of faith and conduct shall be preserved without an infringement of the principles requisite to make every church a portion of that sublime invisible society, the "Church Universal," constituted of all the members of Christ's mystical body.

Rapidly approaching, as we seem to be, to that state of things when all churches, national as well as others, will feel the expediency, if not the necessity, of reverting to first principles in modifying and improving their several communities, the controversy on "Terms of Communion" forces itself upon the attention as one of primary importance, serving to ascertain and determine almost every question of value in reference to ecclesiastical polity.

I thus, though but for a moment, advert to this controversy, that the general reader may not be induced to under value it. It occupies a considerable portion of the first volume of these works, besides the substance of a distinct pamphlet inserted in the second volume. Of the different writers who opposed Mr. Hall on this occasion, Mr. Kinghorn was, unquestionably, the most acute and learned. His volume should be read in connection with Mr. Hall's, by such as wish to view the question in all its bearings. Mr. Hall's part of the controversy is conducted with his characteristic, frankness and decision; and evinces the same clearness, copiousness, strength, and majesty of diction as he uniformly displayed upon every subject to which he bent his mind with all its power. Sometimes when a narrow, illiberal sentiment, calculated to check the spirit of Christian union and affection, excites his indignation, he rebukes with a cutting severity; and I feel no inclination to deny, that, in a few cases, he has suffered himself to indulge in terms of sarcasm, if not of contempt, that add nothing to his argument, and had been better spared. Yet, as one of his bitterest opponents has declared, "it was seldom that his thunder was heard, but the bolt was felt; and both were exercised on the side of truth and virtue."

In these, as in others of his controversial pieces, the reader may safely reckon upon much that is eloquent and impressive, apart from what immediately relates to the ques-

tions under debate. Among which may be specified the remarks on excommunication, the beautiful delineation of the conduct of our Lord, the passages distinguishing between conditions of salvation and meritorious conditions, and those in which he discriminates between the atonement contemplated as a fact and as a doctrine, and thence infers the "peculiar glory of the gospel in contradistinction from the law of Moses."

About this time\* Mr. Hall had a correspondence with a friend on a kindred subject, that of occasional communion. That individual, though a decided Baptist, and long a member of a dissenting church, was in the habit of occasional communion with an Episcopalian chapel in his neighborhood, the minister of which held evangelical sentiments. Mr. Hall expressed a desire to be acquainted with his reasons for this practice. In reply, he informed Mr. Hall that he thought those reasons flowed obviously from the principles for which he himself was so earnestly and successfully contending: that one of the highest enjoyments of a man who humbly hoped he constituted a part of the church universal was to testify his feeling of brotherhood with other assemblies of orthodox Christians, than that with which he was immediately connected, by holding communion with them at convenient seasons; that in this respect, as the political grounds of dissent were of very little value in his esteem, he made no mental distinction between established and separate churches: that, having no conscientious objection to kneeling at the sacrament, and having resolved never to communicate even occasionally but where he had reason to believe the bulk of those who partook of the sacrament were real Christians, he felt no hesitation as to the propriety, while he could speak decidedly as to the comfort, of the course he had pursued. He stated, further, that with Richard Baxter he "disowned the principle of many who think their presence maketh them guilty of all that is faulty in the public worship and ministration: for this dissolveth all worshiping churches on earth, without exception;" that he considered Baxter's Refutation of Dr. Owen's arguments against occasional communion as complete: and that he would rather err in the spirit of Baxter and Howe, on such a question, than be right according to the narrow measures by which too many would enforce a contrary practice. Mr. Hall's reply, which is subjoined, exempli-

\* Nearly at this time, also, viz. in September, 1817, the faculty of Marischal College, Aberdeen, at the instance of their late learned principal, Dr. W. L. Brown, conferred upon Mr. Hall the degree of D. D., in testimony of their high admiration of his talents and character. He felt much gratified by this mark of their good opinion; but, having a conscientious objection to the title of doctor of divinity, he never adopted it.



sies his usual manner of guarding against a misapprehension of the real extent of his agreement with another upon any disputed point.

"March, 6, 1818.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I am much obliged to you for the frankness with which you have answered my inquiries. Perhaps I may not be quite prepared to go with you the full extent of your moderation; though on this I have by no means made up my mind. I admire the spirit with which you are actuated, and esteem you more than ever for the part you have acted. I perfectly agree with you that the *old grounds* of dissent are the true ones, and that our recent apologists have mixed up to much of a political cast in their reasonings upon this subject. Though I should depreciate the founding of *any established church*, in the popular sense of that term, I think it very injudicious to lay that as the corner-stone of dissent. We have much stronger ground in the *specific* corruptions of the Church of England, ground which our pious ancestors occupied, and which may safely defy every attempt of the most powerful and acute minds to subvert. With respect to occasional conformity, I by no means think it involves an abandonment of dissent; and I am inclined to think that, were I in a private station (not a minister, I mean,) I should, under certain circumstances, and in certain situations, be disposed to practise it; though nothing would induce me to acknowledge myself a permanent member of the Church of England.

"In regard to episcopacy, it appears to me entirely a human, though certainly a very early invention. It was unknown, I believe, in the apostolical times; with the exception, probably, of the latter part of John's time. But, as it was practised in the second and third centuries, I should have no conscientious objection to it. As it subsists *at present* among us, I am sorry to say I can scarcely conceive a greater [abuse.] It subverts equally the rights of pastors and of people, and is nothing less than one of the worst relics of the papal hierarchy. Were every thing else what it ought to be in the established church, prelacy, as it now subsists, would make me a decided dissenter.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I remain, my dear sir, with great esteem,

"Yours most affectionately,

"R. HALL."

Mr. Hall's engagement for the press, numerous and heavy as they were to one who wrote with so much difficulty and pain, did not draw him aside from pastoral watchfulness over his church and congregation; nor were they permitted to shorten those

hours of retirement in which he sought "converse with God." Nothing, on the contrary, was more evident than his increased spirit of devotion as he advanced in life. About the year 1812, he commenced the practice of setting apart one day in a month for especial prayer and fasting. On these occasions he retired into his study immediately after the morning domestic worship, and remained there until the evening. Finding this eminently conducive to his own comfort, at the end of about two years he recommended the church to hold quarterly fasts. They at once adopted the recommendation; and some of the members often speak of the first meeting for this purpose as a most extraordinary season of devout and solemn feeling.

About the same time, or somewhat earlier, he announced his opinion of the disadvantage arising from the presence of others besides the communicants on sacramental occasions. In a short address he explained the customs of the early Christians with regard to the Lord's Supper, and showed that the admission of spectators who were not members of the church during the celebration was comparatively a modern innovation. He pointed out the inconclusiveness of the ordinary arguments, that spectators often receive benefit from the addresses of the ministers, and that therefore their exclusion was cutting them off from good, and that such exclusion was an infringement of religious liberty. He also stated that the presence of such spectators deprived him of much comfort during the communion service, and that he should regard their keeping away as a personal kindness to himself. His address was received with affectionate respect; and from that time, those who had previously remained to witness the administration discontinued the custom.

Some time after the conclusion of his part of the controversy on "Terms of Communion," he made an effort to persuade the church at Harvey-lane to adopt the practice of "mixed communion;" but finding that it would disturb the peace which had so long subsisted in the society, he relinquished his intention, and recommended the formation of a distinct church on the mixed communion principle, its sacramental service being held on the morning of the same Sabbath on which the "strict communion" church held its corresponding service in the afternoon. This plan was adopted and followed during Mr. Hall's continuance at Leicester, without causing any interruption of the harmony which prevailed among the different classes of worshipers.

In the year 1823, the minister of a Unitarian congregation at Leicester, having delivered a series of what are usually denominated "challenge lectures," in defence

of his own opinions, to hear which individuals of other persuasions were publicly invited, Mr. Hall felt it to be his duty to offer a timely antidote to the evil. He therefore preached twelve lectures on the points at issue, and had the happiness to know that they were serviceable in checking the diffusion of Socinian error. He was strongly urged by several members of his congregation, and by various neighboring ministers, to publish the whole; but uniformly replied, that though he believed they had been beneficial, he was conscious they contained nothing that could be regarded as really new in the controversy; and that Dr. Wardlaw had so admirably occupied the ground in his sermons, already before the public, that any thing which he could offer in print would only be regarded as an impertinent intrusion.

Throughout the whole of Mr. Hall's residence at Leicester, he suffered much from his constitutional complaint; and neither his habit of smoking, nor that of taking laudanum,\* seemed effectually to alleviate his sufferings. It was truly surprising that this constant severe pain, and the means adopted to mitigate it, did not in any measure diminish his mental energy. A little difference was, perhaps, discernible in the vivacity of his conversation; but his preaching had, as yet, lost nothing of its force. In letters to his friends he expressed a hope that "a greater savor of Jesus Christ accompanied his ministry;" and remarked, that "his strain of preaching was much less elegant, but more intended for instruction, for awakening conviction, and carrying home truth with power to the heart." And thus it was found, that, as he advanced in years, though there might be a little less of elaboration and polish, there was more of spiritual feeling, more of tender and earnest expostulation, and of that pungency of application to the heart and conscience, which resulted from an enlarged acquaintance with human character, and a deeper knowledge of "the things of God." That the Divine blessing accompanied these labors, and in many cases rendered the impression permanent, the history of the church and congregation abundantly proves.

The death of Dr. Ryland in 1825 led to Mr. Hall's invitation to take the pastoral office over the church at Broadmead, Bristol, an office which had been long and honorably sustained by that excellent individual. After some months spent in anxious deliberation, in advising with his friends, and seeking counsel from above, from the dread he felt lest he "should rush into a sphere of action to which he was not called,

and offend God by deserting his proper post," he at length decided to dissolve his long and happy connection with the church at Leicester. The day of separation, the last sacrament Sabbath, March 26, 1826, was a day of anguish to him and them, of which I shall not attempt the description. Suffice it to say, that he went through the ordinary public duties of the day with tolerable composure;\* but at the sacramental service he strove in vain to conceal his emotion. In one of his addresses to the members of the church, on adverting to the pain of separation, he was so much affected that he sat down, covered his face with his hands, and wept; they, sharing in his distress, gave unequivocal signs of the deepest feeling. Mr. Eustace Carey, who was present, continued the devotional part of the service, until Mr. Hall was sufficiently recovered to proceed. At the close of the solemnity the weeping became again universal, and they parted "sorrowing most of all that they should see his face no more."

Very shortly afterward the church received from Mr. Hall the following letter of resignation.

"TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST MEETING IN HARVEY-LANE, LEICESTER.

"3d April, 1826.

"MY DEAR BRETHERN AND SISTERS,

"I take this opportunity of solemnly and affectionately resigning the pastoral charge which I have long sustained among you, and of expressing, at the same time, the deep sense I shall ever retain of the marks of affection and esteem with which, both collectively and individually, you have honored me.

"Though the providence of God, has as I conceive, called me to labor in another part of his vineyard, my solicitude for your spiritual welfare will ever remain unimpaired, nor will any thing give me more joy than to hear of your growth in grace, peace, and prosperity. My prayer will never cease to ascend to the God of all comfort, that he will establish your hearts in love, unite you more and more in the fellowship of saints, and make you fruitful in every good work.

"Let me earnestly entreat you to guard most anxiously against whatever may tend to weaken your union, diminish your affection, or embitter your spirits against each other. 'Let brotherly love continue;' 'seek peace and pursue it;' and 'may the God of peace, who brought again from the

\* In 1812 he took from fifty to one hundred drops every night. Before 1826 the quantity had increased to one thousand drops.

\* In order that neither his feelings nor those of the congregation might be too severely tried during the public services, he preached two sermons for the Baptist Mission: that in the morning from Ephes. iii. 8, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;" that in the evening from Matt. vi. 10, "Thy kingdom come."



dead the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, stablish, strengthen, settle, and make you perfect."

"I hope that, in the choice of a successor, you will earnestly and anxiously seek Divine direction; prefer the useful to the splendid; the solid to the glittering and showy; and be supplied with a pastor who will, in doctrine, exhibit 'uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, and sound speech which cannot be condemned,' and be in manner and behavior a pattern to believers.

"Permit me, on this occasion, to return you my sincere acknowledgments for the uniform kindness with which you have treated me, the respectful attention you have paid to my ministry, and the candor with which you have borne my infirmities.

"With my most earnest prayers for your spiritual and eternal welfare, I remain,

"My dear brethren and sisters,

"Your obliged and affectionate friend  
and brother,

"ROBERT HALL."

Mr. Hall was in his sixty-second year when he removed to Bristol, the scene of his first continuous labors, and now to become the scene of his closing ministry. Some of the friends of his early life still survived to welcome his return among them; and many others, who had profited by his pulpit exertions on his periodical visits to Bristol, congratulated themselves that he to whom, under God, they owed so much had become their pastor. All things, indeed except his infirm state of health, seemed to conspire in promoting his own happiness as well as the prosperity of the church with which he had again connected himself.

The church and congregation soon received numerous accessions. In writing to a friend, early in 1829, he says, "I continue to be very happy with my people, from whom I daily receive every demonstration of affection and respect. Our attendance is as good as I could wish; and we have added to the *Baptist* church, during the last year, twenty-seven, and six are standing candidates for baptism. For these tokens of the Divine presence I desire to be thankful."

His heavenly Father, during the concluding years of his life, made a rich provision for his social enjoyments, both in his family and among his friends. Besides the comfort of frequent associations with many of his own flock, his pleasures were greatly heightened by intercourse with Mr. Foster, and the tutors of the Baptist Academy, as well as with several clergymen and other ministers and laymen, residing in Bristol and its vicinity. It is true, that wherever he went, or in whatever he engaged, he carried with him the complaint from which

he had suffered so much and so long. It had become, as his esteemed friend Mr. Addington termed it, "an internal apparatus of torture;" yet, such was the peculiar structure of his mind, doubtless fortified and prepared for patient endurance by an energy imparted from above, that though his appointment by day and by night was incessant pain, yet high *enjoyment* was, notwithstanding, the law of his existence.

Between his final removal to Bristol and his death, he visited his friends at Cambridge twice, namely, in 1827 and 1829. These visits were undertaken with the sense of responsibility of one who had formerly been their pastor: and he made it a rule so to arrange his time while there as to see, converse with, and exhort every member of the church, and a great proportion of the congregation. He paid also one visit to his recently-quitted flock at Leicester; and two to his friends in London. On these occasions the anxiety to hear him preach was as great as it had ever been; while his sermons were characterized in a high degree by the qualities that had long distinguished them, with the addition of a stronger manifestation of religious and benevolent affections, a still more touching persuasiveness of manner, continued with an increasing intensity of feeling, with deeper and deeper solemnity of appeal: the entire effect being greatly augmented by the sudden introduction, just as the last sentence seemed dropping from his lips, of some new topic of application or of caution, most urgently pressed; as though he *could* not cease to invite, to warn, to expostulate, until the "Great Master of assemblies" vouchsafed to him the assurance that he had not been pleading his cause in vain.

Mr. Hall's increasing infirmities did not extinguish his literary ardor, or abate his love of reading. Except during the first years of his residence at Cambridge, reading, and the thinking it called forth, were his incessant occupation to the very close of life; and both the pursuit and its application to the benefit of others yielded him the highest delight. In his early life, as I have already mentioned, it was common with him to carry on five or six different courses of study simultaneously. But for the last ten or twelve years, he mostly confined himself to one book at a time, and read it to the end. His reading continued to be very extensive and varied (for it was his decided opinion that every species of knowledge might be rendered subservient to religion,) but his predilection, next to the scriptures, was for works of clear, strong, and conclusive reasoning, though conveyed in language far from elevated, and sometimes perhaps obscure. Thus he, for full sixty years, read Jonathan Edward's

writings with undiminished pleasure. And of Chillingworth's "Religion of Protestants" he has often been known to say, "It is just like reading a novel;" which, indeed, was his usual expression of commendation with regard to such works of a dry or abstract nature as discovered subtilty, depth, or vigor of thought. In this class he placed the works of Jeremy Bentham, for whom he entertained the highest estimation, as an original, profound, and accurate thinker; observing often, that in the particular province of his speculations, the science of legislation, he had advanced to the limits of reason; and that if he were compelled to legislate for the world upon uninspired principles, "he should take Bentham, and go from state to state with as firm a step as though he walked upon a pavement of adamant."\*

If, at any time, he could not settle a point of interest without studying a language of which he was ignorant, that constituted no impediment. Shortly before he quitted Leicester, a friend found him one morning, very early, lying on the carpet, with an Italian dictionary and a volume of Dante before him. Being about to quit the room, he said, "No, sir, don't go. I will tell you what I have been about for some weeks. A short time since I was greatly delighted with a parallel between the *Paradise Lost* and the *Divine Comedy* of Dante which I read in the *Edinburgh Review*. But in matters of taste, as well as others, I always like to judge for myself; and so I have been studying Italian. I have caught the idiom, and am reading Dante with great relish; though I cannot yet say, with Milton,

"Now my task is smoothly done,  
I can fly or I can run."

It may seem somewhat out of place, yet I shall be forgiven if I here insert an extract of a letter just received from Mr. Ryley, one of Mr. Hall's most intelligent Leicester friends, in reference to his course of reading there.

"It was what some men might think desultory; but it was essentially a constant habit of grappling with the strong. *Belles Lettres* he did not altogether neglect, though he held the average of such literature in small estimation. Poetry he seldom read, nor did he seem to me to have even studied it *con amore*. He thought Gray's *Elegy* the finest thing ever written. Milton was his favorite. There was something peculiar in his habits respecting poetry. He spoke slightly of poets, with few exceptions, and those few by no means what might have been expected from his own highly

imaginative cast of mind. Yet, when he did get hold of an exquisite poem, he would read it with intense attention, apparently with the deepest interest, and then abuse it. With the exception of Milton, who is, in fact, an antique, he preferred the ancient to the modern poets. Of the poetry of our own day, he spoke with a contempt which an accurate or extensive acquaintance with it would have compelled him to relinquish. He had not, I think, made history a distinct and consecutive study, though he had read many of the original historians. He seemed to feel this of late years, and gave much of his time to the subject."

His enjoyment of the writings of the illustrious men of Greece and Rome remained unimpaired to the last. Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero suggested to him many noble arguments in favor of an internal spring of morality, which he employed with his wonted skill in support of the religion of pure motive and devotedness of spirit. Virgil's *Georgics* he characterized as the most finished of human compositions; and he continued to prefer Virgil to Homer. He greatly admired the copiousness, grace, and harmony of Cicero's diction; but considered Demosthenes by far the most powerful orator the world had known; and after speaking with fervid applause of the oration *περι Στεφανου*, added, that he thought it impossible for a man of soul and feeling to read a single page without catching fire. Only a few months before his last illness, in classifying the different natures and respective effects of the eloquence of reason, of passion, and of imagination, he selected his principal illustrations from Demosthenes, and endeavored to show that where the two former kinds of eloquence existed in due proportion, the third was of very minor consequence. The individual to whom he made these remarks was struck, as he proceeded, with the development which they supplied of the causes of the deep impression made by his own pulpit addresses; and imputed his more sparing use of imagery in later years, rather to the deliberate conviction of his mind, than to any diminution of the imaginative faculty.

But I must restrain myself, and pass to Mr. Hall's every-day habits after his return to Bristol. The course of his life at home, when not interrupted by visitors, was very uniform. He generally rose and took his breakfast about nine o'clock. Breakfast was immediately succeeded by family worship. At this exercise he went regularly through the scriptures, reading a portion of the Old Testament in the morning, and of the New Testament in the evening. On Sunday morning he almost invariably read the ninety-second Psalm, being short, and appropriate to the day. He also read

\* He always recommended those who were likely to be offended with the strangeness of Bentham's style to study his principles through the medium of his elegant French commentator M. Dumont.



in his family the translation of the four Gospels by Campbell, whom he particularly admired, and often recommended, as an accurate translator, and a critic of great acuteness, taste, and judgment. He seldom made any remarks on the portion of scripture, except when strangers were present, who, he knew, would be disappointed at their entire omission. He regarded himself as very incompetent to render this brief kind of exposition instructive. In the prayer that succeeded, he was not in the habit of forming his petitions on the passage of scripture just read, though the prayer was usually of considerable length, and very minute in its appropriation. He adverted specifically to all the persons belonging to his family present and absent; never forgot the people of his care; and dwelt on the distinct cases of members of the church that were under any kind of trial or affliction.

After breakfast and worship, he retired into his study, and uniformly spent some time in devotion, afterward generally reading a portion of the Hebrew Bible. For the last two years, he read daily two chapters of Matthew Henry's Commentary. As he proceeded he felt increasing interest and pleasure; admiring the copiousness, variety, and pious ingenuity of the thoughts, the simplicity, strength, and pregnancy of the expressions. He earnestly recommended this commentary to his daughters; and on hearing the eldest reading, for successive mornings, to the second, he expressed the highest delight. The remainder of the morning until dinner, about three o'clock, was spent in reading some work of learning or of severe thought. After dinner he generally retired to his study, and, if not in so much pain as to prevent it, slept for some time.

On Tuesday evenings were held what are termed "the conferences," in the vestry of the Broadmead chapel: they are meetings ordinarily attended by about two hundred persons, at which two of the students belonging to the Bristol Education Society, or one of the students and the president, speak on a passage of scripture previously selected for the purpose. Mr. Hall always attended on these occasions, and concluded by speaking for about a quarter of an hour, on the subject of the preceding addresses. He also attended the prayer-meetings, in the same place, on Thursday evenings; except once a month, namely, on the Thursday previous to the administration of the Lord's Supper, when he preached.

The other evenings in the week, except Saturday (and that, indeed, not always excepted,) he usually spent at the house of one or other of his congregation, with a

very few friends, who were invited to meet him. His inability to walk having greatly increased, his friends generally sent a carriage for him about six o'clock, and conveyed him back about ten.

It is difficult to say whether he had greater fondness for retirement or for company. It displeased him if, especially by sudden interruptions, he was obliged to give up his morning hours of study to visitors; and it would commonly have been a disappointment, if he had not the opportunity of spending his evenings in society. If he were, at any time, thrown among persons of distinguished talents and attainments, and their general character pleased him, it was soon shown how truth and knowledge might be educated by the operation of intellect upon intellect, and how rich a field of instruction and delight would thus be open for the general enjoyment of the party. Usually, however, his choice turned simply upon the prerequisite of piety; he sought for no other acquisitions in his associates from the graces of the Spirit; intelligence added to the enjoyment, but was not essential to it. The society of old friends had with him an exquisite charm, which was greatly heightened if their fathers had been known and esteemed by him or his father, such intercourse, requiring no effort, gave full scope to his affections, without disturbing his mental repose. He uniformly retired from these evening parties full of grateful references to the pleasure which he had felt. If any of his family who accompanied him happened to say that the evening had been dull, he would reply, "I don't think so. It was very pleasant. I enjoyed it. I enjoy every thing." Considering the continuity of his sufferings, how touching a commentary is this upon the inspired aphorism, "the good man shall be satisfied from himself?"

Mr. Hall commonly retired to rest a little before eleven o'clock; but after his first sleep, which lasted about two hours, he quitted his bed to obtain an easier position on the floor, or upon three chairs; and would then employ himself in reading the book on which he had been engaged during the day. Sometimes, indeed often, the laudanum, large as the doses had become, did not sufficiently neutralize his pain to remove the necessity for again quitting his bed.\* In these cases he would again put on the dress prepared to keep him adequately warm, and resume his reading. On Sunday mornings, as soon as he awoke it was usual with him to say, "This is the Lord's day. This is the day the Lord hath

\* For more than twenty years he had not been able to pass a whole night in bed. When this is borne in mind, it is truly surprising that he wrote and published so much; nay, that he did not sink into dotage before he was fifty years of age.

made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." And he often impressed it on his family that they ought "not to think their own thoughts," or "to find their own pleasure," on that day.

He did not pursue any plan of training or of discipline with his children. He was remarkably affectionate and indulgent; but he did nothing systematically to correct defects, to guide or excite their minds. Now and then he recommended his daughters to read some particular book; one, perhaps, that he had himself read with peculiar satisfaction: but beyond this there do not appear to have been any direct, specific endeavors to impart knowledge, or in any uniform manner to inculcate religious principles.

When, however, any of his children were about to quit home for a short time, it was his practice to summon them to his study, exhort them, and pray with them. One of his daughters, on writing to a friend after his death, says, "Well I remember that when I was a child, on leaving home for a few days, or on going to school, he would call me into the study, give me the tenderest advice, make me to kneel down by him at the same chair, and then, both bathed in tears, would he fervently supplicate the Divine protection for me. This, I believe, he did with regard to all of us on leaving home, while young." Their minds were also often deeply impressed by hearing him, as they passed his study door, commending them, by name, with the utmost fervency, to God, and entreating those blessings for each which, in his judgment, each most needed.\*

Periodical private fasts, such as those which he observed at Leicester, he continued to observe at Bristol, making them seasons of extraordinary self-examination, prayer, and renewed dedication to God. He was not in the habit of keeping a regular journal, nor, generally speaking, did he approve of it, from a persuasion that it tempted to an artificial tone of expression which did not accord with the actual state of the heart. But on some solemn occasions he made a short note in one of his memorandum books, containing hints of texts, &c.

Thus: "New-year's day, January 1st, 1826. I have begun the year with a sincere resolution, in the strength of Divine grace, to devote myself wholly and entirely to God: but, knowing my extreme weakness and corruption, I dare place no dependence whatever on my own resolutions. I have, on many occasions, found them unstable as water. I can only cast myself on

the mercy of my God, and cry with the Psalmist, 'Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.' O Thou most holy and merciful Lord God, I beseech Thee to take up thine abode in my heart, and shape me entirely anew. Amen. Amen."

Again, on his birth-day, 1828. "This day I commence my 64th [65th] year. What reason have I to look with shame and humiliation on so long a tract of years spent to so little purpose! Alas! I am ashamed of my barrenness and unprofitableness. Assist me, O Lord, by Thy grace, that I may spend the short residue of my days in a more entire devotion to Thy service. It is my purpose, in the strength of Divine grace, to take a more minute inspection into the state of my heart, and the tenor of my actions, and to make such observations and memorandums as circumstances may suggest. But to Thee, O Lord, do I look for all spiritual strength, to keep Thy way, and do Thy will."

Mr. Hall still evinced a peculiar solicitude for the welfare of the poorer members of his flock, and greatly lamented his incapacity, from the loss of locomotive energy to seek them out in their own habitations, and associate with them frequently, as he had done with the poor at Cambridge and Leicester. He publicly expressed his concern that some plan was not arranged for his meeting them in small parties at specified times, and assured them of the cordial readiness with which his part of such a plan should be executed. This, I believe, was not accomplished.

The indications of infirm age now rapidly exhibited themselves, but happily, were unaccompanied by a decaying mind or a querulous spirit. The language of his conduct and of his heart corresponded with that of the pious ancient, "Lord, give me patience now, and ease hereafter!" If tempests come they will not last long, but soon will be hushed into an eternal calm.

His inability to take exercise, on account of the gradual increase of his complaint, gave rise, about six years before his death, to another disorder, formidable in its nature and fatal in its issue. The indications of a plethoric habit became more and more apparent. "Thus," adopting the language of Mr. Addington, "the system of the blood-vessels had a laborious duty to perform in circulating their fluid, which, for want of the full aid of muscular exertion, could not be equally distributed. The smaller ones on the surface of the body, and in the extremities, never appeared to derive a sufficient quantity of blood to furnish the usual proportion of animal heat, while the large trunks in the interior became overloaded. The natural consequence was, that the heart, on whose power the propulsion of

\* His habit of oral, audible, private prayer rested upon the conviction that silent prayer was apt to degenerate into meditation, while, from our compound nature, a man cannot but be affected by the sound of his own voice, when adequately expressing what is really felt.



the blood to the extremities depends, being over stimulated and oppressed by the condition of the large vessels, became weakened; and, occasionally failing in the regular and equable transmission of the blood, would produce a sensation of distress in the region of the chest." The malady, thus produced, becoming more and more severe. Mr. Hall, when in London in 1828, was persuaded by his friends to take the advice of an eminent physician: from which however, no permanent good resulted. By the summer of 1830, the disorder had increased so seriously that his medical friends at Bristol recommended a suspension of his pastoral duties for a few weeks, that he might try the effect of a total change of air and scene.

He therefore spent some time at Coleford, in the forest of Dean, in the society of his old and valued friend the Rev. Isaiah Birt. He also spent a few weeks at Cheltenham. At both these places he preached with his accustomed talent; and his general appearance, too clearly indicating that the close of his ministerial labors was at hand, gave a deeper impression to his instructions and exhortations. When absent from home he was in the habit of writing to his children. My narrow limits have prevented my giving extracts from any of those letters; but I am induced to insert part of one, written at this time to his son, who had been placed with a respectable chymist and druggist at Bristol, in the hope that it may be useful to other youths in similar circumstances.

"15th October, 1830.

"MY DEAR ROBERT,

"I have long designed to write to you, that I might communicate to you some hints of advice, which I could convey more easily, and, perhaps, more affectually, than by speaking.

"I need not tell you, my dear boy, how solicitous I am for your welfare in both worlds, and how often I have borne you on my heart in my secret addresses to that Father which is in heaven. But, alas! the prayers of parents for their children will avail nothing, if they are not induced to pray for themselves, 'for every one must give an account of *himself* to God.' I hope my dear child, you do not live in the entire neglect of this most important duty: let me entreat you to attend to it constantly, and never to begin or end a day without it. Daily entreat the pardon of your sins, for the sake of the Redeemer, and earnestly implore the assistance of his grace, to enable you to resist temptation, and to live in such a manner as shall prepare you for a blessed immortality. Pray do not neglect, at the same time to read a portion, longer

or shorter, of the Word of God. 'Where-with shall a young man cleanse his ways, but by taking heed thereto according to thy Word?'

"I hope, my dear Robert, you will continue in your present situation. On the supposition of your doing so (and I can do nothing better for you,) let me entreat you to make it your constant care to conciliate the esteem of Mr. C——, which you will certainly do, if you cheerfully comply with his orders, and make his interest your own. Nothing injures the character of a young man more than restlessness and fickleness; nothing, on the contrary, secures his credit and comfort like a steady and persevering attention to the duties of his station. Every situation has its inconveniences and its difficulties; but time and perseverance will surmount the one, and make you almost insensible of the other. The consciousness of having overcome difficulties, and combated trials successfully, will afford you, in the issue, a far higher satisfaction than you can ever hope to obtain by recoiling from them.

"Combat idleness in all its forms; nothing is so destructive as idle habits, nothing so useful as habits of industry.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Never demean yourself by contending about trifles; yield in things of small moment to the inclinations and humors of your companions. In a word, my dear boy, make yourself amiable.

"Fear God and love your fellow-creatures, and be assured you will find 'Wisdom's ways, ways of pleasantness, and her paths, paths of peace.'

"To say all in one word, 'If you are wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.'

"I am

"Your affectionate father,

"ROBERT HALL."

On Mr. Hall's return to Bristol towards the end of October, hopes were entertained that his health was improved, and his strength recruited; but they were only of short duration. The spasmodic affection of the chest occurred with increasing frequency, and in a more alarming character. In one instance, on the 1st of January, 1831, the attack was so severe as to threaten immediate dissolution. It passed off, however, as former attacks had done, on taking blood from the arm; and soon afterward he returned to spend the remainder of the evening with the friends whom he had left when the paroxysm came on; and in his usual cheerful and happy spirit took his ordinary share, and evinced an undiminished interest, in the conversation.

The morning of that day had been signalized by the extraordinary pathos which he imparted to the religious services, at a

prayer-meeting, held, according to annual custom, in the vestry at Broadmead. The intensity of his devotional feelings, and the fervor of his supplications in behalf of the assembled congregation, as well as the glowing affection and deep solemnity with which he addressed them, as he reviewed the past dispensations of Providence, and anticipated some of the probable events of the year now opening upon them, both in relation to them and himself, excited the strongest emotion, and, in connection with the events that immediately followed, made an indelible impression upon their minds: nearly all his subsequent addresses, whether on the Sunday or the week-day evening services, partook, more or less, of the same pathetic and solemnly anticipatory character. One of the most impressive of these, of which many of the congregation retain a vivid recollection, was delivered on the morning of Sunday, January, 16th. The text from which he preached was, Deuteronomy xxxiii. 25: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

In this discourse he seemed to be preparing his people and himself for that event by which they were to be deprived of their invaluable pastor, and he to be freed from anguish and sorrow: when his soul, liberated from its chain, and clothed in the Redeemer's righteousness, was to go forth, "first into liberty, then into glory."

A highly valued correspondent,\* enables me to present the following summary of Mr. Hall's application or improvement; which, from its occasion, as well as its excellence, cannot but be read with lively interest.

"Improvement. 1. Take no thought, no anxious, distressing, harrassing thought for the morrow; suffer not your minds to be torn asunder by doubt or apprehension. Consider, rather, what is the *present* will of God, and rest satisfied and content; without anticipating evils which may never arrive.

"Do not heighten your present sorrows by a morbid imagination. You know not what a day may bring forth. The future is likely to be *better* than you expect, as well as worse. The real victory of Christians arises from *attention to present duty*. This carries them from strength to strength.

"Some are alarmed at the thought of death; they say, How shall I meet the agonies of dissolution! But when you are called to die, you will, if among God's children, receive dying consolation. Be satisfied if you have the strength to live to God, that God will support you when you come

to die. Some fear persecution, lest, at such a season, they should 'make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience.' 'As thy day is, such shall thy strength be.'

"2. Consider to what it is we owe our success. If we are nearer our salvation than when we believed, let us not ascribe it to ourselves, to our own arm, but to the grace of God: 'Not I, but the grace of God with me,' enabling me to sustain, and to conquer. If we continue, it is 'because we have obtained help of God:' we are '*kept* by his mighty power unto salvation.' In all our sufferings, if Christians, we are perpetually indebted to Divine succor.

"3. Let us habitually look up to God, in the exercise of faith and prayer. Instead of yielding ourselves to dejection, let us plead the promises, and flee to the Divine Word. He has been accustomed to sustain the faithful: and He is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' He is never weary: look to Him: 'they that wait on him shall mount up with eagles' wings; run, and not be weary; walk, and not faint.' Go to him in prayer, cling to His strength, lay hold on His arm. You have a powerful Redeemer: 'be strong in the power of His might! Draw down the succors of His grace, which will enable you to go on, 'from strength to strength,' until you appear before God in Zion."

The last service at Broadmead in which Mr. Hall took any part was the church meeting (when only the members of the church are assembled) on Wednesday the 9th of February. His closing prayer on that occasion is spoken of as most spiritual and elevated, exhibiting in its highest manifestation, the peculiar union of humility, benevolence, and fervor, by which his devotional exercises had very long been characterized.

On the next evening, Thursday, the usual monthly sermon preparatory to the administration of the Lord's Supper was to have been delivered; but Mr. Hall's discharge of this duty was prevented by a severe attack of the complaint in his chest, which came on just after he had retired to his study to prepare for that service. This was the commencement of the series of paroxysms which terminated in his dissolution.

"Early on the Sunday morning (I again quote one of the letters of my esteemed friend Mr. Addington) being requested to see him, I found him in a condition of extreme suffering and distress. The pain in his back had been uncommonly severe during the whole night, and compelled him to multiply, at very short intervals, the doses of his anodyne, until he had taken no less than 125 grains of solid opium, equal to more than 3,000 drops, or nearly four ounces, of

\* The Rev. Thomas Grinfield, A. M., of Clifton, near Bristol.



laudanum! This was the only instance in which I had ever seen him at all overcome by the soporific quality of the medicine; and it was, even then, hard to determine whether the effect was owing so much to the quantity administered as to the unusual circumstance of its not having proved, even for a short time, an effectual antagonist to the pain it was expected to relieve.

"Inured as he was to the endurance of pain, and unaccustomed to any strong expression of complaint, he was forced to confess that his present agony was unparalleled by any thing in his former experience. The opium having failed to assuage his pain, he was compelled to remain in the horizontal posture; but while in this situation, a violent attack in his chest took place which in its turn rendered an upright position of the body no less indispensable. The struggle that ensued between these opposing and alike urgent demands became most appalling, and it was difficult to imagine that he could survive it; especially, as from the extreme prostration of vital energy, the remedy by which the latter of those affections had often been mitigated, viz. bleeding, could not be resorted to. Powerful stimulants, such as brandy, opium, ether, and ammonia, were the only resources; and, in about an hour from my arrival, we had the satisfaction of finding him greatly relieved and expressing his lively gratitude to God.

"The whole of his demeanor throughout this agonizing crisis, as well as during the remainder of the day, a day of much suffering, exhibited, in a striking degree, the efficacy of Christian faith and hope, in supporting and tranquilizing the mind of their possessor, in a season of extreme and torturing affliction. His language abounded with expressions at once of the deepest humility and of thankfulness to God for his 'unspeakable mercies,' together with affectionate acknowledgments of the care and assiduities of his family and the friends around him."

From this time the paroxysms increased rapidly both in frequency and severity; and Mr. Hall, in the intervals between their occurrence, was usually so weak and exhausted as seldom to be able to converse with those around him. His expressions however, insulated and broken as they often were, proved that he was able fully to exercise that trust in God which is the grand principle of religion, and that thus trusting in him, his soul was kept in peace. No murmuring, no language of irritability escaped from his lips.

It is not my intention to dwell upon the melancholy detail of the ten days previous to his death. I will only record a few such expressions as serve to show that, acute as

were his sufferings, God left him not without support.

Thus, when he first announced his apprehension that he should never again minister among his people, he immediately added, "But I am in God's hands, and I rejoice that I am. I am God's creature, at his disposal, for life or death; and that is a great mercy."

Again, "I have not one anxious thought, either for life or death. What I dread most are dark days. But I have had none yet: and I hope I shall not have any."

Again, "I fear pain more than death. If I could die easily, I think I would rather go than stay; for I have seen enough of the world, and I have an humble hope."

On another occasion, a friend having said to him, 'This God will be our God,' he replied, "Yes, he will, he will be our guide even unto death."

On recovering from one of his severe paroxysms, he adverted to the affectionate attentions of his beloved wife and daughters, as well as his numerous comforts, and exclaimed, "What a mercy it is to have so many alleviations! I might have been deprived of all these comforts; I might have been in poverty; I might have been the most abject wretch on the face of the earth."

During one night, in which the attacks were a little mitigated in number and severity, he frequently expressed the most lively gratitude to God, as well as his simple, unshaken reliance on his Saviour; and repeated nearly the whole of Robinson's beautiful hymn.

"Come, thou Fount of every blessing!  
Tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
Streams of mercy never ceasing  
Call for songs of endless praise!" &c.

The same night, under one of the paroxysms, he said to the friend who was with him, "Why should a living man complain? a man for the punishment of his sins? I have not complained, have I, sir? and I won't complain."

When Dr. Prichard was invited to join Mr. Chandler and Mr. Addington in consultation, on his arrival Mr. Hall arose and received him so much in his wonted cordial, courteous manner, as, at the first moment, almost to check the apprehension of danger. On the evening of the same day, he expatiated on the mercy of God in bringing him to close his life at Bristol.

His prevailing kindness was evinced throughout, in his solitude for the comfort of those who sat up with him at night, or who remained in the house to be called to his assistance if necessary. He also exhorted the members of his family, and others occasionally present, to make religion the chief, the incessant concern; urging especially upon some of the young among his

friends the duty of openly professing their attachment to Christ and his cause.

When he was a little recovered from one of his severe paroxysms, "I asked him," says Mr. Chandler, "whether he felt much pain. He replied that his sufferings were great: 'but what,' he added, 'are my sufferings to the sufferings of Christ? his sufferings were infinitely greater: his sufferings were complicated: God has been very merciful to me—very merciful: I am a poor creature—an unworthy creature; but God has been very kind—very merciful.' He then alluded to the character of the suffering of crucifixion, remarking how intense and insufferable they must have been, and asked many minute questions on what I might suppose was the process by which crucifixion brought about death. He particularly inquired respecting the effect of pain; the nervous irritation; the thirst; the oppression of breathing; the disturbance of the circulation; and the hurried action of the heart, till the conversation gradually brought him to a consideration of his own distress; when he again reverted to the lightness of his sufferings when contrasted with those of Christ. He spoke of our Lord's 'enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself;' of the ingratitude and unkindness he received from those for whom he went about doing good; of the combination of the mental and corporeal agonies sustained on the cross; the length of time during which our Lord hung; the exhaustion occasioned, &c. He then remarked how differently he had been situated; that though he had endured as much or more than fell to the lot of most men, yet all had been in mercy. I here remarked to him, that with most persons the days of ease and comfort were far more numerous than those of pain and sorrow. He replied, 'But I have been a great sufferer in my time; it is, however, generally true: the dispensations of God have been merciful to me.' He then observed, that a contemplation of the sufferings of Christ was the best antidote against impatience under any troubles we might experience; and recommended me to reflect much on this subject when in pain or distress, or in expectation of death."

"During the whole of this severe illness, he read much in Campbell's translation of the Gospel; and, at intervals, one of his daughters read to him, from this version, his favorite to the last. On the morning of the 21st, the day on which he died, he had it laid before him, as usual, and read it himself in his ordinary recumbent attitude."

Mrs. Hall, in the course of this morning, remarking to him that he appeared better, and expressing her hopes that he would recover; he replied, "Ah! my dear, let us *hope* for the best, and *prepare* for the

worst." He then stated his opinion that this day would be critical. When his medical attendants met in consultation, a little after noon, he seemed rather better; and Mr. Chandler left him, between one and two reclining on the sofa, leaning on his elbow with as much muscular energy as ever.

"Before leaving him," he remarks, "I explained to him the plan of proceeding to be observed; on which he bowed, saying, that whatever we wished he would comply with, he would do whatever we desired; begging that he might not interfere with my duties to other patients, and adding that he thought he should be very comfortable till my return.

"In a very short time, and before I had reached home, I was summoned to behold the last agonizing scene of this great and extraordinary man. His difficulty of breathing had suddenly increased to a dreadful and final paroxysm. It seems this last paroxysm came on more gradually than was usual with those which preceded. Mr. Hall finding his breathing becoming much worse, first rose more on his elbow, then raised his body, supporting himself with his hands, till the increasing agitation obliged him to rise completely on the sofa, and to place his feet in hot water; the usual means he resorted to for relief in every paroxysm. Mrs. Hall, observing a fixation of his eyes, and an unusual expression on his countenance, and indeed in his whole manner, became alarmed by the sudden impression that he was dying; and exclaimed in great agitation, 'This can't be dying!' when he replied, 'It is death—it is death—death! Oh the sufferings of this body!' Mrs. Hall then asking him, 'But are you comfortable in your mind?' he immediately answered, 'Very comfortable—very comfortable!' and exclaimed, 'Come Lord Jesus—Come.' He then hesitated, as if incapable of bringing out the last word; and one of his daughters, involuntarily, as it were, anticipated him by saying, 'Quickly!' on which her departing father gave her a look expressive of the most complacent delight.

"On entering his room, I found him sitting on the sofa, surrounded by his lamenting family; with one foot in the hot water, and the other spasmodically grasping the edge of the bath; his frame waving in violent, almost convulsive heavings, sufficiently indicative of the process of dissolution. I hastened, though despairingly, to administer such stimulants as might possibly avert the threatening termination of life; and as I sat by his side for this purpose he threw his arm over my shoulders for support, with a look of evident satisfaction that I was near him. He said to me, 'I am dying: death is come at last: all will now be



useless.' As I pressed upon him draughts of stimulants, he intimated that he would take them if I wished; but he believed all was useless. On my asking him if he suffered much, he replied, 'Dreadfully.' The rapidly increasing gasping soon overpowered his ability to swallow, or to speak, except in monosyllables, few in number, which I could not collect; but, whatever might be the degree of his suffering (and great it must have been,) there was no failure of his mental vigor or composure. Indeed, so perfect was his consciousness, that in the midst of these last agonies, he intimated to me very shortly before the close, with his accustomed courteousness, a fear lest he should fatigue me by his pressure; and when his family, one after another, gave way in despair, he followed them with sympathizing looks, as they were obliged to be conveyed from the room. This was his last voluntary movement; for immediately a general convulsion seized him, and he quickly expired."

O! how inconceivably blessed is the change when, at the moment of utmost agony, the soul enters the regions of endless joy; passes from the land of the dying to the land of the living; from the society of saints to the blissful presence of the King of saints, where knowledge, illumination, purity, and love flow for ever and ever from the inexhaustible Fountain! Such is the ineffable reward which awaits all the faithful followers of the Lamb. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

Nothing, I feel, would be more presumptuous

than for me to attempt to portray fully the literary, intellectual, or religious character of my inestimable friend. I have known, and still know, many whom I greatly value, many whom I cordially love and admire, many from whom I have learned much and might have learned more, but for my incapacity to receive what they were ready to impart; but I have known none in whom so many elements of mental and moral greatness were so happily combined as in Mr. Hall; none whose converse and whose diversified knowledge have so constantly interested, charmed, and instructed me; none whose transcendent qualities excited so high and overawing a veneration, yet none whose humility and cordiality, exquisitely blending with genius and piety, inspired so unhesitating a confidence.

His profound acquaintance with the mind and heart, and his corresponding faculty of tracing and separating the springs of human action, gave him an unusual influence with the present race as a sacred orator: while he seems to be one of the few men whose creative intellect, and whose singular ability in the development of religious truth, and the illustration and confirmation of many principles of universal and increasing interest, qualify them to operate with as extensive an influence in moulding the intellectual and moral character of succeeding generations.

His varied and extraordinary powers, thus diffusively applied to the most momentous subjects, will be seen from his "Works," which are now collected that they may constitute his noblest monument, the most enduring tribute to his memory.

THE END.

STRICTURES  
ON  
SANDEMANIANISM  
IN  
TWELVE LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

By REV. ANDREW FULLER.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE been told more than once that my not answering the piece written some years since by Mr. A. McLean has been considered as a proof that I felt it unanswerable. But, if so, I must have felt the productions of many other opponents unanswerable as well as his; for I have seldom had the last word in a controversy. The truth is, I was not greatly inclined to answer Mr. M. I felt disgusted with the illiberality of his repeatedly arraigning my motives, his accusing me of intentional misrepresentations, and his insinuating as though I could "take either side of a question as I found occasion." I contented myself, therefore, with writing a small tract, called *The Great Question Answered*; in which, while complying with the desire of a friend, I endeavored to state my views *without controversy*; and as Mr. M. had given a caricature description of what my principles would amount to, if applied in the form of an address to the unconverted, I determined to reduce them to that form; hoping also that, with the blessing of God, they might prove of some use to the parties addressed.

Whether it was owing to this tract or not, I have reason to believe that the friends of religion, who attended to the subject, did me justice at the time, and that even those who favored Mr. M's side of the question thought he must have mistaken the drift of my reasoning, as well as have imputed motives to me of which I was innocent.

Whatever Mr. M. may think of me, I do not consider him as capable of either intentional misrepresentation, or taking either side of the question as he may find occasion. That my principles are misrepre-

sented by him, and that in a great number of instances, I could easily prove: but the opinion that I have of his character leads me to impute it to misunderstanding and not to design.

I am not conscious of an unbrotherly feeling towards Mr. M. In resuming the subject, however, after such a lapse of time I have no mind to write a particular answer to his performance, though I may frequently notice his arguments. It is in consequence of observing the nature and tendency of the *system* that I undertake to examine it. Such an examination will not only be more agreeable to my own feelings, but more edifying to the reader, than either an attack on an individual opponent or a defence of myself against him.

In calling the sentiments I oppose *Sandemanianism*, I mean nothing invidious. The principles taught by Messrs. Glass and Sandeman, about half a century ago, did certainly give a new turn and character to almost every thing pertaining to the religion of Christ, as must appear to any one who reads and understands their publications. In the north it is the former of these authors who gives name to the denomination; with us it is the latter, as being most known by his writings.

I have denominated Sandemanianism a *system*; because it not only, as I have said, affects the whole of Christianity, but induces all who embrace it to separate from other Christians. Mr. Sandeman manifestly desired that the societies which were connected with him should be unconnected with all others, and that they should be considered as the only true churches of Christ. Such a view of things amounts to more than a difference on a few points of doctrine; it is a distinct species of religion, and requires, for distinction's sake, to have a name, and till some other is found by which it can be designated it must be called after that of its author.

It is not my design to censure Sandema-



nianism in the gross. There are many things in the system which, in my judgment are worthy of serious attention. If Mr. Sandeman and his followers had only taught that faith has revealed truth for its object, or that which is true antecedently to its being believed, and whether it be believed or not; that the finished work of Christ, exclusive of every act, exercise, or thought of the human mind, is that for the sake of which a sinner is justified before God; that no qualifications of any kind are necessary to warrant our believing in him; and that the first scriptural consolation received by the believer arises from the gospel, and not from reflecting on the feelings of his own mind towards it; they would have deserved well of the church of Christ.

Whether those against whom Mr. S. inveighs, under the name of *popular preachers*, were so averse to these principles as he has represented them is another question. I have no doubt, however, but they and many other preachers and writers of the present times stand corrected by him and by other writers who have adopted his principles.

Mr. Eeking (in his Essays, p. 33) remarks on some passages in Mr. Boston's *Fourfold State* with much propriety, particularly on such language as the following: "Do what you *can*; and it may be while you are doing what you can for yourselves God will do for you what you *cannot*." Again: "Let us believe as we *can*, in obedience to God's command, and while we are doing so, although the act be at the beginning but natural, yet, in the very act, promised and purchased grace strikes in and turns it into a supernatural act of believing." From other parts of Mr. Boston's work, it appears that he did not consider grace as promised to any of the works of the unregenerate; but allowing him, by "promised grace" in this passage, to mean that which was promised to Christ on behalf of those who were given him by the Father, yet the language is unscriptural and dangerous, as giving the sinner to understand that his inability is something that excuses him, and that in doing what he *can* while in enmity to God he obeys the divine command, and is, at least in a more hopeful way of obtaining supernatural grace. The apostles exhorted sinners to *repent and believe the gospel*, and to nothing short of it, making no account of their inability. If we follow their example, God may honor his own ordinances by accompanying them with his Holy Spirit; but, as to any thing being done in concurrence with the endeavors of the unregenerate, we have no such idea held out to us in the oracles of God.

It is God's ordinary method, indeed, prior to his bestowing that supernatural grace

which enables a sinner to repent and believe the gospel, by various means to awaken him to reflection and to the serious consideration of his condition as a transgressor of the divine law. Such convictions may last for a considerable time, and may issue in true conversion; but they may not: and so long as the gospel-way of salvation is rejected or neglected, in favor of some self-righteous scheme, there is nothing truly good in them. They are as the *noise* and the *shaking* of the dry bones, but not the *breath of life*. They are the means by which God prepares the mind for a welcome reception of the gospel, but they contain no advance towards Christ on the part of the sinner. He is not nearer the kingdom of heaven, nor less in danger of the wrath to come, than when he was at ease in his sins. Nay, notwithstanding the outward reformation which such convictions ordinarily produce, he is not, upon the whole, a less sinner in the sight of God than he was before. On the contrary, "He who continues, under all this light, and contrary to the plain dictates and pressing painful convictions of his own conscience, obstinately to oppose and reject Jesus Christ, is, on the account of this his impenitence and obstinacy, under this clear light and conviction of conscience, (whatever alteration or reformation has taken place in him in other respects,) *more guilty, vile, and odious in God's sight than he was before.*"\*

For a minister to withhold the invitations of the gospel till he perceives the sinner sufficiently, as he thinks, convinced of sin, and then to bring them forward as something to which he is entitled, holding up his convictions and distress of mind as signs of grace, and persuading him, on this ground, to think himself one of God's elect and warranted to believe in Christ, is doing worse than nothing. The comfort which the apostles presented to awakened sinners consisted purely in the exhibition of Christ and the invitations to believe in him. Neither the company addressed by Peter nor the Philippian jailor were encouraged from any thing in the state of their own minds, though both were deeply impressed, but from the gospel only. The *preachers* might and would take encouragement on perceiving them to be pricked in their hearts, and might hope for a good issue; but it had been at their peril to encourage *them* to hope for mercy any otherwise than as believing in the Son of God.

The Hyper-Calvinists, who set aside the invitations of the gospel to the unregenerate, abound in these things. They are aware that the scriptures do invite sinners

\* Hopkin's *True State of the Unregenerate*, p. 6.

of some sort to believe in Christ; but then they conceive them to be sensible sinners only. It is thus that the terms *hunger*, *thirst*, *labor*, *heavy-laden*, &c., as used in the scripture invitations, are considered as denoting *spiritual* desire, and as marking out the persons who are entitled to come to Christ. That gospel invitations should be addressed to sinners *as the subjects of those wants and desires* which it is adapted to satisfy, such as the thirst for happiness, peace, rest, &c., is no more than might be expected. It had been strange if living waters had been presented to them who in *no sense* were thirsty, or rest to them who were in *no sense* weary and heavy-laden; but it does not follow that this thirst and this weariness are *spiritual*. On the contrary, they who are invited to buy and eat, without money and without price, are supposed to be "spending their money for that which is not bread;" are admonished as "wicked" men to forsake their way; and invited to return to the Lord under a promise of abundant pardon, on their so returning. "The heavy-laden," also, are supposed as yet not to have come to Christ, nor taken his yoke, nor learned his spirit; and surely it could not have been the design of Christ to persuade them to think well of their state, seeing he constantly teaches that till a sinner come to him, or believe in him, he is under the curse. It is also observable that the promise of *rest* is not made to them as *heavy-laden*, but as coming to Christ with their *burdens*. There is no proof that *all* who were "pricked in their hearts" under Peter's sermon, and who inquired, "What shall we do?" believed and were saved. On the contrary, it seems to be intimated that only a *part* of them "gladly received the word, and were baptized." Had they *all* done so, it would probably have been said, "Then they gladly received his word, and were baptized." Instead of this it is said, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized," &c. implying that there were some who, though pricked in their hearts, yet "received not" the word of the gospel, and were not baptized; and who might leave the place under an impression that the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus Christ was a hard saying. There are many, it is to be feared, who at this day feel guilt to be a heavy burden, and yet never bring it to Christ; but lay it down on some self-righteous resting-place, and so perish forever.

It does not follow, however, that *all* convictions of sin are to be resolved into the operations of an awakened conscience. There is such a thing as a conviction of the *evil nature* of sin, and that by a view of the spirituality and equity of the divine law. It was by the "commandment" that Paul

perceived sin to be exceeding sinful. Such a conviction of sin cannot consist with a rejection of the gospel way of salvation, but, as soon as it is understood, instantly leads the sinner to embrace it. It is thus that "through the law we become dead to the law, that we may live unto God."

I may add, the attention of Christians appears to have been too much drawn towards what may be called *subjective* religion, to the neglect of that which is *objective*. Many speak and write as though the truth of the gospel was a subject out of doubt, and as though the only question of importance was, whether they be interested in its blessings; and there are not a few who have no doubt of their believing the former, but many doubts respecting the latter. Hence, it is probable, the essence of faith came to be placed, not in a belief of the gospel, but in a persuasion of our being interested in its benefits. If, however we really believe the one, there is no scriptural ground to doubt of the other; since it is constantly declared that he who believeth the gospel shall be saved.

If the attention of the awakened sinner, instead of being directed to Christ, he turned inward, and his mind be employed in searching for evidences of his conversion, the effect must, to say the least, be uncomfortable, and may be fatal; as it may lead him to make a righteousness of his religious feelings, instead of looking out of himself to the Saviour.

Nor is this all: If the attention of Christians be turned to their own feelings, instead of the things which should make them feel, it will reduce their religion to something vastly different from that of the primitive Christians. Such truths as the following were the life of their spirits: "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures." "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to the gospel." "We have a great high-priest that has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," &c. But, by the turn of thought and strain of conversation in many religious connections of the present day, it would seem as if these things had lost their influence. They are become "dry doctrines," and the parties must have something else. The elevation and depression of their hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, is with them the favorite theme. The consequence is, as might be expected, a living to themselves rather than to him that died and rose again; and a mind either elated by unscriptural enjoyment or depressed by miserable despondency. It is not by thinking and talking of the sensa-



tions of hunger, but by feeding on the living aliment, that we are filled and strengthened.

Whether the above remarks will satisfy Mr. M'Lean that these are "really my fixed sentiments," and that he has greatly misunderstood the ends for which I wrote the piece on which he animadverted, and of course misrepresented my principles as to their effect on awakened sinners, I cannot tell.\* Be this as it may, I trust other readers will be under no temptation to do me injustice.

But, whatever danger may arise from those principles which are too prevalent among us, they are not the only errors, nor does all the danger arise from that quarter. Subjective religion is as necessary in its place as objective. It is as true that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," as that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." It is necessary to look into ourselves for the purpose of conviction, though not for the cause of salvation; and though the evidence of the truth of the gospel is without us, and independent of our state of mind towards it, yet this is not the case with respect to evidence of an interest in its blessings. We have no warrant to expect eternal life but as being the subjects of those things to which it is promised.

I do not perceive, therefore, how it can be justly affirmed, as it lately has been, that "self-examination is not calculated to quiet the conscience, to banish slavish fear, or to remove doubts and apprehensions of our being unbelievers;" and still less how it can be maintained that "peace of mind founded on any thing in ourselves will always puff us up with pride." If the state of our souls be bad, indeed, self-examination must disquiet the conscience, rather than quiet it: but are there no cases in which, through the accusations of others, or a propensity in ourselves to view the dark side of things rather than the bright one, or the afflicting hand of God, our souls may be disquieted within us and in which self-examination may yield us peace? Did the review which Job took of his past life (chap. xxxi.) yield no peace to him? And though he was not clear when examined by the impartial eye of God, yet were all his solemn appeals respecting his integrity the workings of self-righteous pride? Was David puffed up when he said, "Lord, I have hoped in thy salvation, and have done thy commandments?" Did John encourage a confidence in the flesh, when he said, "If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God?" or Peter, when he appealed to Christ, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee?"

Had it been only affirmed that no peace of mind can arise from the recollection of what we have felt or done in times past, while at present we are unconscious of any thing of the kind, this had been true. Past experiences can no otherwise be an evidence of grace to us than as the remembrance of them rekindles the same sentiments and feelings anew. But to object to all peace of mind arising from a consciousness of having done the will of God, and to denominate it "confidence in the flesh," is repugnant to the whole tenor of scripture.

A system may contain much important truth, and yet be blended with so much error as to destroy its salutary efficacy. Mr. Sandeman has expunged a great deal of false religion; but whether he has exhibited that of Christ and his apostles is another question. It is much easier to point out the defects and errors of other systems than to substitute one that is even less exceptionable; and to talk of "simple truth," and "simple belief," than to exhibit the religion of Jesus in its genuine simplicity.

In discussing the points at issue, we shall meet with some things which may be thought of too metaphysical a cast to be of any great importance: and, had not the effects produced convinced me of the contrary, I might have thought so too. But though the principles on which the system rests are many of them so minute as almost to elude detection, yet they are not the less efficacious. The seed is small, but the branch is not so.

It has been regretted that any person who drinks thoroughly into these views is at once separated from all his former religious connections, whatever they might be; and, where the heart has been united it must needs be a matter of regret: yet, upon the whole, it may be best. Whatever fruits are produced by this species of religion, whether good or bad, they are hereby much more easily ascertained. Its societies bear some resemblance to so many farms, taken in different parts of the kingdom, for the purpose of scientific experiment; and it must needs be apparent, in the course of fifty or sixty years experience, whether upon the whole, they have turned to a better account than those of their neighbors.

I will only add, in this place, that though I do not conceive of every one as embracing this doctrine who in some particulars may agree with Mr. Sandeman, (for in that case I should be reckoned to embrace it myself,) yet many more must be considered as friendly to it in the main than those who choose to be called either Sandemanians or Glassites. It has been held by people of various denominations; by Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists; and has been observed to give a distinctive character to

\* See his Reply, pp. 45, 47, 153.

the whole of their religion. In this view of the subject I wish to examine it; paying attention not so much to persons or names as to things, let them be embraced by whom they may.

## LETTER II.

*A general view of the system, with its leading points of difference from the systems which it opposes.*

ALTHOUGH the writings of such men as Flavel, Boston, Guthrie, the Erskines, &c., are represented by Mr. Sandeman as furnishing "a devout path to hell," and the writers themselves as pharisees, "than whom no sinners were more hardened, and none greater destroyers of mankind," yet he allows them to have set before us "many articles of the apostolic doctrine;" yea, and to have "asserted almost all the articles belonging to the sacred truth." Considering this, and that so far as these writers held with "good duties, good endeavors, and good motions" in unbelievers, preparing them for faith, we give them up, it may seem as if there could be no great difference between Mr. Sandeman and us. Yet a difference there is, and of such importance, too, as deeply to affect the doctrine, the worship, the spirit, and the practice of Christianity.

The foundation of whatever is distinguishing in the system seems to relate to the nature of justifying faith. This Mr. S. constantly represents as the bare belief of the bare truth; by which definition he intends, as it would seem, to exclude from it every thing pertaining to the will and the affections, except as effects produced by it.

When Mr. Pike became his disciple, and wished to think that by a "bare belief" he meant a *heartly persuasion*, and not a mere notional belief, Mr. S. rejected his construction, and insisted that the latter was his true meaning. "Every one," says he, "who obtains a just *notion* of the person and word of Christ, or whose *notion* corresponds to what is testified of him, is justified, and finds peace with God simply by that *notion*."<sup>\*</sup>

This notion he considers as the effect of truth being impressed upon the mind, and denies that the mind is *active* in it. The inactivity of the mind in believing is of so much importance, in his account, that the doctrine of justification by grace depends upon it. "He who maintains," says he, "that we are justified only by faith, and at the same time affirms, with Aspasio, that

faith is a work exerted by the human mind, undoubtedly maintains, if he have any meaning to his words, that we are justified by a work exerted by the human mind."<sup>\*</sup>

Mr. Sandeman not only opposes all active endeavors previously to faith, and as tending to procure it, (in which I have no controversy with him,) but sets himself against all exhortations, calls, warnings, and expostulations, with the sinner to believe in Christ. "If," says he, "it be inquired what I would say for the relief of one distressed with a sense of guilt, I would tell him, to the best of my ability, what the gospel says about Christ. If he still doubted, I would set before him all the evidence furnished me by the same gospel. Thus, and thus only, would I press, call, invite, exhort, or urge him to believe. I would urge him with evidence for the truth."<sup>†</sup> And when asked how he would exhort advise, or address *stupid, unconcerned souls*, He answers, "I am of the mind that a preacher of the gospel, as such, ought to have no influence on men but by means of the gospel which he preaches. When Paul discoursed concerning *the faith in Christ*, and as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled. It is the *duty* of every man, in every condition, to obey every divine command. The gospel always supposes this while addressing all men as sinners; it demonstrates their danger, and discovers the remedy. Yet it is absurd to suppose that any man can love the gospel, or obey it, till he believe it. Therefore, to urge unbelievers to any shadow of that obedience as preparative to justification by faith, can have no other effect than to lead them to establish their own righteousness, and to stand in awe of the preacher."—p. 29.

If there be any meaning in this answer, it would seem to be that *faith itself* is not a duty, and that unbelievers ought not to be exhorted to it, lest it should lead them to self-righteousness; but barely to have the evidence of truth stated to them.

Mr. S. represents the sinner as justified, and as having obtained peace to his soul while utterly destitute of the love of God. "I can never begin to love God," says he, "till I first see him just in justifying *me* ungodly as I stand." p. 12. But, being justified in this his ungodly state of mind, he loves God on account of it; and here begins his godliness: "It all consists in love to that which first relieved him."—p. 8.

If he had represented the doctrine of Christ as giving relief to the guilty creature, irrespective of any consciousness of a change in himself, or as furnishing him with

<sup>\*</sup> Epistolary Correspondence, Letter II.

<sup>\*</sup> Letters on Theron and Aspasio, Vol. I. p. 123.

<sup>†</sup> Epistolary Correspondence, p. 5.



a ground to conclude that God can be just and the justifier of him *if he believes in Jesus*, this had accorded with Paul's gospel, (Rom. iv. 24;) but for a sinner to perceive himself justified implies a consciousness that he is a believer, and such a consciousness can never be separate from a conscious love to the divine character. If, indeed, the gospel were an expedient merely to give relief to sinners, and no regard was had in it to the glory of God, a sinner full of enmity to God, might receive it, and derive peace from it; but, if it be an essential property of it to secure the glory of the divine character, the belief of it must include a sense of that glory, which cannot consist with enmity against it.

Let it also be seriously considered whether it be true that a sinner is justified "ungodly as he stands?" If it be, he must have been so either *antedecently* to his "seeing" it to be so, and then it must be equally true of *all* ungodly sinners; or it becomes so *when* he sees it, and *by* his seeing it, which is the very absurdity, which Mr. S. fastens on the popular preachers.

Mr. S. and many others have caught at the phrase of the apostle Paul, of "God's justifying the ungodly;" but unless they can prove that by *ungodly* the apostle meant one who was at the time an enemy of God, it makes nothing in their favor. The amount is, Mr. S.'s relief arises from his "seeing" what is not to be seen; viz. God to be just in justifying him ungodly as he stands; and, his relief being founded in falsehood, all his godliness which confessedly arises from it, must be delusive. The root is rottenness, and the blossoms will go up as the dust.

From the leading principles of doctrine above stated it is easy to account for almost all the other peculiarities of the system. Where the root and substance of religion is placed in knowledge, exclusive of approbation, it may be expected that the utmost stress will be laid on the former, and that almost every thing pertaining to the latter will be decried under the name of pharisaism, or some other odious appellation. Thus it is that those who have drunk into this system generally value themselves on their *clear* views; thus they scarcely ever use any other phrase by which to designate the state of a converted man than his knowing the truth; and thus all those scripture passages which speak of knowing the truth are constantly quoted as being in their favor, though they seldom, if ever, mean knowledge as distinguished from approbation, but as including it.

Farther: I do not perceive how a system whose first principle is "notion," and whose love is confined to "that which first relieves us," can have the love of God in it. It can-

not justify God as a Lawgiver, by taking blame and shame to ourselves; for it necessarily supposes, and even professes, an abhorrence to both law and justice in every other view than as satisfied by the cross of Christ. The reconciliation to them in this view, therefore, must be merely on the ground of their becoming friendly to our interests. But, if God be not justified as a Lawgiver, Christ can never be received as a Saviour. There is no more grace in justification than there is justice in condemnation: nor is it possible we should see more of the one than the other; for we cannot see things otherwise than as they are to be seen. But surely a system which neither justifies the Lawgiver nor receives the Saviour as honoring him cannot be of God. The love of God as God is not in it. Conversion, on this principle, is not turning to the Lord. It professes, indeed, to love God; but it is only for our own sake. The whole process requires no renovation of the spirit of the mind; for the most depraved creature is capable of loving himself and that which relieves him.

Is it any wonder that a religion founded on such a principle should be litigious, conceited, and censorious towards all who do not embrace it? It is of the nature of a selfish spirit to be so. If God himself be loved only for the relief he affords us, it cannot be surprising that men should; nor that, under the cover of loving them only for the truth's sake, all manner of bitterness and contempt should be cherished against every one who dares to dispute our dogmas.

Farther: The love of God being in a manner excluded from the system, it may be expected that the defect will be supplied by a punctilious attention to certain forms; of which some will be found to arise from a misunderstanding of the scriptures, and others which may not, yet, being regarded to the neglect of weightier matters, resemble the *tithing* of mint, anise, and cummin.

Such, from the repeated views that I have been able to take of the system, appear to me to be its grand outlines; and I am not surprised to find that, in the course of half a century, it has landed so large a part of its votaries on the shores of Infidelity, or sunk them in the abyss of worldly conformity. Those who live near them say there is scarcely any appearance of serious religion in their families, unless we might call by that name the scrupulosity that would refuse to pray with an unbeliever, but would have no objection to accompany him to the theatre. Mr. S. and his admirers have reproached many for their *devotion*; but I cannot learn that they were ever reproached with this evil in return.

The grand argument of Mr. S. against

faith being an act of the mind, and against admitting of any active advance of the soul towards Christ as necessary to justification, is that it is rendering faith a *work*; and that to be justified by faith would, after all, be to be justified by a work of our own. This is the principal idea pertaining to what he calls "the very rankest poison of the popular doctrine."<sup>\*</sup> If this argument can be overturned, the greater part of his system falls with it. That it may appear in all its force I will quote his strongest representations of it.

"Perhaps it will be thought needful that I should define with greater precision than I have hitherto done what I mean by the *popular doctrine*, especially as I have considered many as preachers thereof who differ remarkably from each other; and particularly as I have ranked among them Mr. Wesley, who may justly be reckoned one of the most virulent reproachers of that God whose character is drawn by the apostles that this island has produced. To remove all doubt concerning my meaning, I shall thus explain myself. Throughout these letters I consider all those as teachers of the popular doctrine who seek to have credit and influence among the people by resting our acceptance with God, not simply on what Christ has done, but more or less on the use we make of him, the advance we make towards him, or some secret desire, wish, or sigh to do so; or on something we feel or do concerning him, by the assistance of some kind of grace or spirit: or, lastly, on something we employ him to do, and suppose he is yet to do for us. In sum, all who would have us to be conscious of something else than the bare truth of the gospel; all who would have us to be conscious of some beginning of a change to the better, or some desire, however faint, towards such change, in order to our acceptance with God; these I call the popular preachers, however much they may differ from each other about faith, grace, special or common, or about any thing else. My resentment is all along chiefly pointed against the capital branch of the popular doctrine, which while it asserts *almost* all the articles belonging to the sacred truth, at the same time deceitfully clogs them with the opposite falsehoods."

Again: "That the saving truth is effectually undermined by this confusion may readily be seen in the following easy view" — (this is what I call his grand argument,) "*He who maintains that we are justified only by faith, and at the same time affirms, with Aspasio, that faith is a work exerted by the human mind, undoubtedly maintains, if he has any meaning in his words, that we*

*are justified by a work exerted by the human mind.*"

"I have all along studied to make use of every form of expression I could think of, for evincing in the most clear, palpable, and striking manner, a difference of the last importance, which thousands of preachers have labored to cover with a mist. If I have made that difference manifest to those who have any attention for the subject, my great end in writing is gained, on whatever side of it men shall choose to rank themselves. It has frequently appeared to me a thing no less amazing than provoking, when the great difference between the ancient gospel here contended for and the popular doctrine has been pointed out as clear as words could make it, to find many, after all, so obstinately stupid as to declare they saw no real difference. This I cannot account for by assigning any other cause than the special agency of the prince of darkness."<sup>\*</sup>

After this, it may be thought an act of temerity to complain of not understanding Mr. Sandeman: and indeed I shall make no such complaint, for I think I do clearly understand his meaning; but whether he has fairly represented that of his opponents I shall take the liberty to enquire.

The popular preachers "rest our acceptance with God," it seems, "not simply on what Christ hath done, but on the active advance of the soul towards him." Do they then consider faith, whether we be active or passive in it, as, forming a part of our justifying righteousness? In other words, do they consider it as any part of that for the sake of which a sinner is accepted? They every where declare the contrary. I question if there be one of those whom Mr. S. *ordinarily* denominates popular preachers who would not cordially subscribe to the passage in Aspasio which he so highly applauds, and considers as inconsistent with the popular doctrine; viz. "Both grace and faith stand in direct opposition to works; *all* works whatever, whether they be works of the law or the gospel, exercises of the heart or actions of the life, done while we remain unregenerate or when we become regenerate, they are all and every of them *equally* set aside in this great affair."<sup>†</sup> If the popular preachers maintain an active advance of the soul to be necessary to our acceptance with God, it is in no other sense than that in which he himself maintains "the bare belief of the truth" to be so; that is, not as a procuring cause, but as that without which, according to the established order of things, there is no acceptance. To accuse them therefore of corrupting the

<sup>\*</sup> Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 448.

<sup>\*</sup> Letters on Theron and Aspasio. Vol. II. pp. 480, 483.

<sup>†</sup> Letters on Theron and Aspasio, Vol. I. p. 276.



doctrine of justification, on this account, must be owing either to gross ignorance or disingenuousness.

Yet in this strain the eulogists of Mr. Sandeman go on to declaim to this day. "His main doctrine," says one, "appears to be this: the bare work of Jesus Christ, which he finished on the cross, is sufficient, without a deed or a thought on the part of man, to present the chief of sinners spotless before God."\* If by *sufficient* be meant that it is that only on account of which, or for the sake of which, a sinner is justified, it is very true; and Mr. Sandeman's opponents believed it no less than he himself; but if it be meant to deny that any deed or thought on the part of man is necessary in the established order of things, or that sinners are presented spotless before God without a deed or a thought on the subject, it is very false, and goes to deny the necessity of faith to salvation; for surely no man can be said to believe in Christ without thinking of him.

Mr. Pike, who had embraced Mr. Sandeman's view of faith, yet says to him, "I cannot but conceive that you are sometimes mistaken in your representations of what you call the popular doctrine; for instance, *Upon the popular plan*, say you, *we can never have peace in our consciences until we be sensible of some beginning of a good disposition in us towards Christ*. Now, setting aside some few unguarded expressions and addresses, you will find that the general drift and purport of their doctrine is just the contrary to this; and they labor this point, both Marshall and Hervey, to convince persons that *nothing* of this nature does or can recommend them to God or be any part of their justifying righteousness; and their principal view is to beget or to draw forth such thoughts in the mind as lead the soul entirely out of itself to Christ alone for righteousness."† It is observable, too, that though Mr. S. answered this letter of Mr. Pike, yet he takes no notice of this passage.

I am not vindicating either Marshall or Hervey in all their views; but justice requires that this misrepresentation should be corrected, especially as it runs through the whole of Mr. Sandeman's writings, and forms the basis of an enormous mass of invective.

By *works* opposed to grace and faith the New Testament means *works done with a view of obtaining life, or of procuring acceptance with God as the reward of them*. If acceptance, faith, or sincere obedience, be recommended as being such a condition of salvation as that God may be expected to bestow it in reward of them, this is turn-

ing the gospel into a covenant of works, and is as much opposed to grace, and to the true idea of justification by faith, as any works of the law can be. But to deny the activity of the soul in believing, lest faith itself should become a work of the law, and so after all we should be justified by a work, is both antiscritptural and nugatory: *antiscritptural*, because the whole tenor of the Bible exhorts sinners to forsake their ways and return to the Lord, "that he may have mercy upon them;" to believe in the light, "that they may be children of light;" and to come to him "that they may have life;" *nugatory*, because we need not go far for proof that men know how to value themselves and despise others on *account* of their *notions* as well as of their *actions*; and so are capable of making a righteousness of the one as well as of the other.

Farther: If there be any weight in Mr. Sandeman's argument it falls equally on his own hypothesis as on that of his opponents. Thus we might argue, He who maintains that we are justified only by faith, and at the same time affirms, with Mr. Sandeman, that faith is a notion formed by the human mind, undoubtedly maintains, if he has any meaning to his words, that we are justified by a notion formed by the human mind.

Mr. S., as if aware of his exposedness to this retort, labors in the foregoing quotation, to make *nothing* of the belief of the truth, or to keep every idea but that of the truth believed out of sight. So fearful is he of making faith to be any thing which has a real subsistence in the mind that he plunges into gross absurdity to avoid it. Speaking of that of which the believer is "conscious," he makes it to be *truth* instead of the *belief* of it; as if any thing could be an object of consciousness but what passes or exists in the mind!

It may be thought that the phrase, "All who would have us to be *conscious* of something else than the bare *truth* of the gospel" is a mere slip of the pen—but it is not; for had Mr. S. spoken of belief, instead of the truth believed, as an object of consciousness, his statement would have been manifestly liable to the consequence which he charges on his opponents. It might then have been said to him, He who maintains that we are justified only by faith, and at the same time affirms that faith is *something* inherent in the human mind, undoubtedly maintains, if he has any meaning to his words, that we are justified by something inherent in the human mind.

You must by this time perceive that Mr. Sandeman's grand argument, or, as he denominates it, his "easy view," turns out to be a mere sophism. To detect it you have only to consider *the same thing in different*

\* Cooper's Letters, p. 33.

† Epistolary Correspondence, p. 24.

views; which is what Mr. Sandeman himself does on some occasions, as do all other men. "I agree with you," says he to Mr. Pike, "in maintaining that faith is the principle and spring of every good disposition, or of every good work; but at the same time, I maintain that faith does not justify the ungodly as a principle of good dispositions." p. 10. Why then may we not maintain that we are justified only by faith, and at the same time affirm that faith is a *grace inherent*, an act of the human mind, a *duty* commanded of God; and all this without affirming that we are justified by any thing inherent, any act of ours, or any duty that we perform? And why must we be supposed to use words without meaning, or to contradict ourselves, when we only maintain that we are justified by that which is inherent, is an act of the human mind, and is a duty; while yet it is not *as such*, but as uniting us to Christ and deriving righteousness from him, that it justifies?\*

Assuredly, there is no necessity for reducing faith to a nullity, in order to maintain the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ. While we hold that faith justifies, not in respect of the act of the believing, but of the righteousness on which it terminates, or that God's pardoning and receiving us to favor is in reward, not of our believing, but of his Son's obedience unto death, every purpose is answered and all inherent righteousness is excluded.

I have been the more particular on this "easy view" of Mr. Sandeman, because it is manifestly the grand pillar of his doctrine. If this be overturned there is nothing left standing but what will fall with a few slight touches: and whether it be so I now leave you and the reader to judge.

To establish the doctrine of free justification Mr. S. conceives it necessary to reduce justifying faith to a bare "belief," exclusive of every "advance" of the mind towards Christ, or of *coming* to him, *trusting* in him, &c., and to maintain that these terms denote the *effects* of faith in those who are already in a justified state.—p. 34.

In opposing Mr. S. many have denied that the belief of the gospel is justifying faith. Observing, on the one hand, that numbers appear to believe the truth, on whom, nevertheless, it has no salutary influence; and, on the other, that believing in Christ in the New Testament, is synonymous with "receiving him," "trusting in him," and "coming to him," they have concluded that the belief of the gospel is rather to be considered as something *pre-supposed* in faith than faith itself. But there can be no doubt that the belief of the gospel has

in a great number of instances, the promise of salvation; and as to those nominal Christians on whom it has no salutary influence, they believe Christ no more than the Jews believed Moses, which our Lord would not allow that they did. "If ye believed Moses," says he, "ye would believe me for he wrote of me."

But though the belief of the gospel is allowed to have the promise of salvation, and so to be justifying, yet it does not follow that it is so *exclusive* of receiving Christ, trusting in him, or coming to him. It were easy to prove that repentance has the promise of forgiveness, and that by as great a variety of passages as are brought to prove that the belief of the gospel is saving faith: but were this attempted we should be told, and justly too, that we are not to consider repentance in these passages as excluding but including faith in the Saviour. Such, then is the answer to the argument drawn from the promises of salvation made to the belief of the gospel: belief, in these connections, is not to be understood exclusive of receiving the Saviour, coming to him, or trusting in him, but as supposing and including them.

It is not denied that the ideas conveyed by these terms are not metaphysically distinct from that of believing the gospel, nor that they are its immediate effects; but it is not in this metaphysical sense that faith is used in reference to justification. That belief of the gospel which justifies, includes receiving Christ, coming to him and trusting in him. Whatever shades of difference there be between belief and these "advances of the mind towards Christ," the Scriptures represent them, *with respect to an interest in justification and other collateral blessings*, as one and the same thing. This is manifest from the following passages: "As many as *received* him, to them gave he power (or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on his name." "I know whom I have *believed*, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have *committed* to him against that day." "That we should be to the praise and glory of his grace who *first trusted* in Christ. In whom ye also trusted after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after ye *believed* ye were sealed," &c. "He that *cometh* to me shall never hunger, and he that *believeth* in me shall never thirst." "Ye will not come with me that ye may have life." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

In these and many other passages it is manifest that believing, coming, trusting, &c., are used as convertible terms, and that the thing signified by them is necessary to justification. If "receiving" Christ were

\* See President Edwards's Sermons on Ju. tit. cation. pp. 11, 25.



an effect of faith in persons already justified, why is it used as synonymous with it, and held up as necessary to our being *the sons of God*? If "coming" to Christ were an exercise of mind in one who was already in a state of justification, why is he said to come to him "that he may have life"? And why, if salvation be promised to a mere "notion" of the truth without any love to it, is it said of apostates, that "they received not the *love of the truth that they might be saved*?" Let those who have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil judge, from these things, whether a mere notion of the truth, exclusive, or, if you please, antecedent to the consideration of receiving Christ, coming to him, and trusting in him, be the faith that justifies; and whether, if the former were separate from the latter, it would not leave the sinner under condemnation.

It has been said, "In defining saving faith, some have included in its essence almost every holy temper; and, by insisting so much on this faith, and giving such labored descriptions of it, have almost inevitably led their followers to look more to their faith than to the great object of faith; to be more occupied in attending to the working of their own minds than with that truth which reconciles the sinner to God. It is in consequence to be feared that not a few who are reckoned orthodox are in fact trusting to their faith, and not to Christ, making him merely a minister of their own self-righteousness: for we may go about to establish our own righteousness under the name of faith, as well as under any other name."

I doubt not but preachers may abound in describing one part of divine truth, to the neglect of another, and may go even beyond the truth; people may also make a righteousness of their faith, as well as of other things. If no more were meant than that a sinner whose inquiry is, What must I do to be saved? ought to be directed immediately to Christ, and not to an examination into the nature of faith, I should most cordially acquiesce in it; but it does not follow that nothing should on any occasion be said of the true nature of faith. There may be a time when the same person shall come with another and very different question; namely, Am I a true believer? Such questions there must have been in the apostle's time, or there would not have been answers to them. See 1 John ii. 3; iii. 14, 15—21. Now in answer to such an inquiry, the true nature and genuine effects of faith require to be stated and distinguished from that which leaves thousands short of salvation. And, as to men making a righteousness of their faith, men may make a righteousness of simple belief as well as of trust, or any other idea supposed to be included,

in justifying faith; and whether there be not actually as much labored description, self-admiration, and contempt of others (things nearly akin to self-righteousness,) among the advocates of this system, as among their opponents, let the candid observer judge. If we are to say nothing about the holy nature of faith, lest men should make a righteousness of it, we must say nothing of any thing else that is holy, for the same reason, and so cease to distinguish all true religion in the mind from that which is counterfeit; but so did not the sacred writers.

To the same purpose Mr. McLean writes in his treatise on the *Commission*: "Now when men include in the very nature of justifying faith such good dispositions, holy affections, and pious exercises of heart as the moral law requires, and so make them necessary (no matter under what consideration) to acceptance with God, it perverts the apostle's doctrine upon this important subject, and makes justification to be at least *as it were* by the works of the law."

I know not of any writer who has given such a definition of faith as these statements would represent. No more holy affection is pleaded for in faith than unholy disaffection is allowed to be in unbelief. But the design is manifestly to exclude *all* holy affection from faith, as being favorable to self-righteousness.

If, therefore, *repentance* be considered as necessary to forgiveness, seeing this must be allowed to include holy affection, it will be considered as favorable to self-righteousness. And as to distinguishing between what is necessary *in the established order of things*, from what is necessary as a *procuring cause*, this will not be admitted; for it is "no matter under what consideration:" if any thing required by the moral law be rendered necessary, "it makes justification to be at least *as it were* by the works of the law." Yet Mr. M. allows faith, whatever it is, to be a *duty*. Is it then a requirement of a *new and remedial law*? Would not the love of God which is required by the old law, lead any sinner to believe in Christ? If not, why is unbelief alleged against the Jews as a proof that they had not the love of God in them? See John v. 42, 43. As Mr. M., however, in his piece on *the Calls and Invitations of the Gospel*, has gone far towards answering himself, I shall transcribe a passage from that performance: "It is an unscriptural refinement upon divine grace," he there says, "and contrary to the doctrine of the apostles, to class faith and repentance with the works of the law, and to state them as equally opposite to free justification. Indeed neither faith nor repentance is the meritorious or procuring cause of a sinner's justification, any more

than the works of the law are, (and who that really believes and repents will imagine that they are?) But still, the one is opposed to free justification, the other not. To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt; and faith and repentance corresponding exactly with the manifestation of divine grace, as freely justifying the guilty through the atonement, are in their very nature opposite to all self-dependence, and lead men to glory in the Lord."—p. 26.

We see here that there is nothing in the nature of *repentance* that clashes with a free justification, which yet must be allowed to include a portion of holy affection. Why then object to the same thing in faith! Is it because holy affection is "required by the moral law?" Be it so: it is the same in repentance as in faith: and, if the one may in its very nature agree with a free justification, so may the other. The truth is, the moral law, *materially* considered, is not opposed to free justification. The love of God and man in its own nature is as opposite to self-righteous pride as faith and repentance are. It is not the law that is against the promises, but those *works of the law done by a sinful creature with a view of obtaining life, or of procuring acceptance with God as the reward of them.* If holy affection were urged with such a view, then were it opposed to the free grace of the gospel; but while this is not the case, all such reasonings are unscriptural refinements.

If men make a righteousness of their faith, it is not owing to these representations of it, but to their own corruptions; for, let faith include what good disposition it may, it is no part of the meritorious cause of justification; and let it be simplified as it may, even till it shall contain no more of the holy nature of God than a glance of the eye, yet is it not on this account more friendly to the doctrine of grace, nor less liable to become the food of a self-righteous spirit. The way in which this spirit is cut up in the New Testament is, not by reducing faith to an unfeeling speculation, but by denouncing the curse against every one who cometh short of perfect obedience. Gal. iii. 10.

It has been further said, "Faith purifies the heart, worketh by love, and discovereth itself sincere by the performance of good works. Faith therefore, is not holiness, love, or new obedience, unless the effect is the same with the cause, or the evidence with the thing proved." Faith certainly is not the same thing as holiness, or love or new obedience. Neither is unbelief the same thing as unholiness, enmity, or disobedience: but it is not so distinct from either as not to partake of the same *general nature*. It is not only the root of all other sin, but is itself a sin. In like manner, faith is not on-

ly the root of all other obedience, but is itself an exercise of obedience. It is called "obeying the truth," and "obeying the gospel." To say that faith includes no holiness, (which this objection certainly does,) and yet produces it, as the seed produces a plant, is to contradict the established laws of nature, according to which every seed produces *its own body*. God can produce something out of nothing, but in the ordinary course of tradition every seed produces *after its kind*. If holiness, therefore, were not included in faith, it would not grow out of it.

Mr. McLean does not agree with Mr. Sandeman in considering faith as a *passive* admission of the truth, but allows it to be an *act or exercise* of the mind.—*Reply*, pp. 74, 75. A large part of his work, however, is taken up in attempting to prove that it is a mere exercise of the understanding, exclusive of every thing pertaining to the will and affections. It is no part of the question between him and me whether, properly speaking, it has *its seat* in the understanding: for this it may have, and yet be influenced by the disposition. Unbelief has its seat in the understanding, as much as belief, yet it is not denied that this is influenced by the disposition. "It arises," says Mr. McLean, "not merely from ignorance, but also from the aversion of the will, whereby the judgment is blinded, and most unreasonably prejudiced against the truth."—p. 76. Nor had Mr. McLean any just ground for construing what I had said in proof of faith in Christ being *such a belief* as arises from a renewal of the spirit of the mind, as an attempt to "prove that faith is *more than belief*."—p. 80. He allows *unbelief* to arise, in part, from disposition; yet I suppose he would not be thought by this concession, to make it something more than unbelief. If unbelief may consist in such a discredit of the gospel as arises from aversion to it, and yet be nothing more than unbelief; faith may consist in such a credit of the gospel as arises from a renewal of the spirit of the mind, and yet be nothing more than belief.

To this may be added, if faith in Christ be a duty commanded of God, an act of the human mind, an exercise of obedience to God, (all which Mr. M. acknowledges,) it must be the effect of regeneration, or it will follow that they that are in the flesh may please God.

Mr. McLean speaks much of simple belief, as Mr. Sandeman did of *bare belief*. Mr. S. manifestly intended hereby to exclude every "advance" of the sinner to Christ, as signified by such terms as coming to Christ, trusting in him, &c., from justifying faith. Such may be the intention of Mr. McLean: if it be not, I do not understand



the use of the epithet. He cannot, however, consistently reject every "advance" of the mind to Christ as belonging to justifying faith, since he acknowledges the soul to be active in believing. But while dwelling so much on simple belief, why does he not dwell also on simple unbelief? If belief be simple, so must unbelief, for they are opposites. And I really acknowledge there are such things as simple belief and simple unbelief; but neither of them applies to the credit or discredit of the gospel. If a stranger, who has no claim on my confidence, relate a story of something that he has seen in a distant country, but which in no way concerns me, I may believe him, or disbelieve him: my faith in the one case, or my unbelief in the other, would be perfectly simple. But if it be a story of deep interest, if the undoubted veracity of the party has a claim on my confidence, and if my future course of life turns upon the credit or discredit that I give him, neither the one nor the other will be simple, but compounded of a number of moral principles which influence my decision: if to discredit his testimony, they are prejudices which blind me to the force of evidence; if to credit it, candor, or openness to conviction. It is thus in believing the gospel, which is a subject of the deepest interest, testified by a Being whose veracity it is a crime to question, and of such consequence to a sinner even in this life, that, if he admit it, he must relinquish all his former courses and live a new life. Intrenched in prejudice, self-righteousness, and the love of sin, he continues an unbeliever till these strong holds are beaten down nor will he believe so long as a wreck of them remains sufficient to shelter him against the arrows of conviction; nor, in short, till by the renovating influence of the Holy Spirit they fall to the ground. It is then, and not till then, that the doctrine of salvation by mere grace, through a mediator, is cordially believed.

Mr. McLean, in his arguing for what he calls simple belief, seems to be aware that it is not the proper opposite of unbelief as described in the scriptures. Hence he somewhere alleges that we cannot reason from the nature of unbelief to that of belief any more than from that of demerit to merit. But the disparity between demerit and merit, to which he refers, does not respect their nature, but the condition of the party who is the subject of them. Merit is the desert of good, and demerit is the desert of evil: they are, therefore, properly opposites, whatever may be the condition of the party as to being equally capable of exercising them; and it is fair in ascertaining their nature to argue from the one to the other.

Upon the whole, I see no reason to retract what I have in substance said before, that if faith and unbelief be opposites,

(which to deny were disowning that which is self-evident,) the one can be no more simple, or exclusive of the influence of the will, than the other.

### LETTER III.

#### *A more Particular Inquiry into the Consequences of Mr. Sandeman's Notion of Justifying Faith.*

You will not conclude from any thing I have said, or may yet say, that I accuse every one who favors this doctrine of holding all the consequences which may be proved to arise from it: it is, however, a fair method of trying a principle, to point out other principles to which it leads, which, if contrary to the scriptures, furnish reasons for rejecting it.

If the faith by which we are justified be a mere passive reception of light, or contain no exercise of affection, it follows:

First, *That repentance is not necessary to forgiveness.* It is allowed on all hands, that justification includes the forgiveness of sin. Whatever differences there be between them, they are not so different but that he who is justified is forgiven. If therefore we be justified by a mere notion of the truth antecedently to all exercise of affection, we are forgiven in the same way; that is, our sins are forgiven before we repent of them.

Mr. Sandeman, I conceive, would have avowed this consequence. Indeed he does avow it, in effect, in declaring that "he can never begin to love God till he first see him just in justifying him, ungodly as he stands." If he cannot begin to love God, he cannot begin to be sorry for having sinned against him, unless it be for the consequences which it has brought upon himself. By being justified "ungodly as he stands," he means to say, therefore that he is justified and forgiven while his mind is in a state of impenitence, and that it is the consideration of this that renders him penitent.

Whether this notion be not in direct opposition to the whole current of both the Old and New Testament, let the following passages, out of many more which might be selected, determine. "I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou *forgavest* the iniquity of my sin." "If thy people Israel sin against thee, and repent, and make supplication unto thee towards this house, then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place and forgive thy people." "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." "Let the

wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Repent, therefore, and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins." "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Him hath God exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I shall not stop here to inquire into the order in which the scriptures represent repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. This I shall attend to in a letter by itself. It is sufficient at present to observe that, whatever be the order of repentance in respect of faith, it is uniformly represented in the scriptures as necessary to forgiveness. Every notion, therefore, of standing forgiven in a state of impenitence, and of this being the only motive that can lead a sinner to repentance, is false and delusive.

Secondly: *On this principle, faith in Christ is not a duty, and unbelief is not a sin.* I am not sure whether Mr. Sandeman would have avowed both or either of these consequences. He, however, utterly disavows urging unbelievers to the least shadow of obedience to the gospel in order to justification, as leading them to establish their own righteousness.\* The faith, therefore, which he allows to be necessary to justification includes no obedience, which is the same thing as its being no duty. And, if it be not a duty, unbelief is not a sin; for, where there is no obligation, there can be no transgression.

But a system which goes to nullify the command of God to believe in his Son Jesus Christ, and to excuse the sin which is threatened with eternal damnation, must be fundamentally erroneous, and, as far as it operates, subversive of true religion.

Mr. McLean is very far from admitting this consequence, though he retains in part the principle from which it proceeds. He allows, as we have seen already, that faith is a duty, an act of obedience to God, and a holy exercise of mind: yet he pleads for its containing nothing pertaining to the will. Is it possible then for any thing to be either an act, or a duty, or to contain obedience, which is purely intellectual? In

whatever belongs to the understanding only, exclusive of the will and affections, the soul, I conceive, is passive. There are acts, no doubt, which pertain to the intellectual, as well as to the visive faculty; but they are only such as fall under the influence of the will. It is an act to look, but not to see; and to collect information, but not to be informed. If, therefore, believing be an act of the mind, it must fall under the influence of the will.

Mr. Sandeman is consistent with himself, however inconsistent he may be with the scriptures. In confining faith to the understanding, he was aware that he disowned its being an act, and therefore, in his usual strain of banter, selected some of the grossest representations of his opponents, and endeavored to hold up acts of faith to ridicule. But Mr. McLean allows of faith being an act, and an act of obedience, and yet will have it that it contains nothing pertaining to the will, except in its effects. I can no otherwise account for such reasoning, in a writer of his talents, than by ascribing it to the influence of early prejudices, contracted by having drank too deeply into the system of Mr. S., and retained by a partiality for what he has once imbibed, though utterly inconsistent with other sentiments which he has since learned from the scriptures. That nothing can contain obedience but that which includes the state or exercises of the will, or has some dependence upon it, is manifest from universal experience. Tell a man that God has commanded him to be or to do that in which he is absolutely involuntary, and that the contrary is a sin, and see whether you can fasten conviction on his conscience. Nay, make the experiment on yourself. Did you ever perceive yourself obliged to any thing in which your will had no concern, or for a moment repent of living in the neglect of it? Knowledge may be a duty, and ignorance a sin, so far as each is independent on the will, and comprehensive of approbation, but no further. *Love is the fulfilling of the law*, or that which comprehends the whole of duty. So much, therefore, as there is of love, in any exercise of mind, so much there is of duty or obedience, and no more. Duty supposes knowledge, indeed, as Christianity supposes humanity; but the essence of it consists in disposition. It may be our duty to examine, and that with care, diligence, and impartiality; but, if disposition have no place in faith, it cannot be our duty to believe.

If faith be merely light in the understanding, unbelief must be merely the absence of it; and, if the former include nothing pertaining to the will, neither does the latter. To say that though unbelief con-

\* Epistolary correspondence, p. 29.



tain a voluntary rejection of the truth, yet faith contains no voluntary reception of it, is saying that belief and unbelief are not opposites, which is equal to denying a self-evident proposition. If the one be purely intellectual, so is the other; and, if there be no obedience in the former, there is no disobedience in the latter.

Mr. McLean has said every thing on this subject that I could desire, except drawing the conclusion. Thus he reasons, when proving faith to be a duty: "Unbelief, which is the opposite of faith, is always represented as a very great and heinous sin against God. The unbelieving heart is termed an evil heart (Heb. iii. 12;) and there are many evils in the heart of man which both occasion and attend unbelief. It is frequently ascribed to ignorance, (Mat. xiii. 19; Rom. x. 3; xi. 7, 25;) yet not to simple ignorance, from want of information or natural capacity, in which case it would be excusable, (John ix. 41; xv. 22, 24;) but such as arises from the agency of the god of this world, blinding the minds of them that believe not. 2 Cor. iv. 4. It is wilful ignorance, occasioned by their loving darkness and hating the light, (John iii. 19, 20;) and so they are represented as having closed their eyes lest they should see. Matt. xiii. 15. From this it appears that unbelief is founded, not merely on simple ignorance, but aversion from the things of God.

"Now, if unbelief be a sin, and seated in the depravity of the heart, as has been shown, it necessarily follows that faith, its opposite, must be a duty," [and have its seat also in the heart.] *Sermons*, pp. 40, 41. The words added in crochets merely go to draw the conclusion; and whether it be fairly drawn let the reader judge.

Mr. M. cannot consistently object that, by allowing unbelief to be seated in the heart, he did not mean to grant that it was seated in the will, since his whole argument asserts the contrary; and he elsewhere says, "The scriptures always represent the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Spirit as exerted upon the heart; which includes not only the understanding, but the will and affections, or the prevalent inclinations and dispositions of the soul."—*Works*, vol. ii. p. 91.

I had said, (in my Appendix,) "I can scarcely conceive of a truth more self-evident than this, that God's commands extend only to that which comes under the influence of the will." Mr. M. allows this to be "a principle on which my main arguments seem to be grounded." It became him, therefore, if he were able, to give it a solid answer. And what is his answer? It is so far, he says, from being self-evident, that to him it does not appear evident at all.

He should instance, then, in something which is allowed not to come under the influence of the will, but which, nevertheless, is a duty. Instead of this, he says the commands of God "extend not only to what comes under the influence of the will, but also to the belief of the revealed truths and motives by which the will itself is influenced." Reply, p. 70. But who does not perceive that this is proving a thing by itself; or alleging as evidence that which is the very point in dispute?

The argument was this: All duty comes under the influence of the will—But faith is a duty—Therefore faith comes under the influence of the will. To have overturned the first of these propositions, which is that which he calls in question, he should have shown by something else than belief, something that is allowed not to come under the influence of the will, that it may, nevertheless, be commanded of God. But this he has not shown, nor attempted to show.

All that Mr. McLean has done towards answering this argument is by laboring to fasten certain absurdities upon it. "If believing God with the understanding," he says, "be not a duty, it must be either because he has not given a clear revelation of the truth, and supported it with sufficient evidence, or if he has, that there is no moral turpitude in mental error."—p. 76.

By this way of writing, it would seem as if I pleaded for men's believing without their understanding, of which I certainly have no idea, any more than of their disbelieving without it. I hold no more in respect of faith than Mr. M. does in respect of unbelief; namely, that it does not pertain to the understanding only. The greatest evidence or authority cannot oblige us to that in which we are absolutely involuntary. God commands us to love him with all our powers, but not beyond our powers. To love him with all our hearts includes every thing that depends upon disposition, even the bowing of our understandings to revealed truth, instead of proudly rejecting it; but that is all. So far as knowledge or belief is absolutely involuntary, we might as well ascribe duty to the convulsive motions of the body as to them. And as to "mental error," if it could be proved to be merely mental, that is, not to arise from indolence, prejudice, aversion, or any other evil disposition, it would be innocent. Christ did not criminate the Jews for simply misunderstanding him, but refers to the cause of that misunderstanding as the ground of censure. "Why do ye not understand my speech? *because ye cannot hear my word*:" that is because they were utterly averse from it. Mr. McLean acknowledges as much as this, when he speaks of the neglect

of the great salvation being the effect of perverseness and aversion, and therefore inexcusable." What is this but admitting that if it arose from simple ignorance it would be excusable?

Another consequence which Mr. M. endeavors to fasten upon this principle is, "If faith be not a duty unless it be influenced by the moral state of the heart, then it can be no man's duty to believe the testimony of God concerning his Son till he is previously possessed of that moral state."—p. 73. But if this consequence were just, it would follow from his own principles as well as mine. He considers the illumination of the Holy spirit as necessary to believing, but does he infer that till such illumination take place it is not a sinner's duty to believe? He also considers repentance as the fruit of faith; but does he infer that till a sinner is in possession of faith it is not his duty to repent? The truth is that God, in requiring any one duty (be it repentance or faith, or what it may,) requires that *as to the state of the mind*, which is necessary to it. It was not the duty of Absalom to ask pardon of David without feeling sorry for his offence: but it does not follow that while his heart was hardened he was under no obligation to ask pardon. He was under obligation to both; and so are men with regard to believing the gospel. They are obliged to be of an open, upright, unprejudiced mind, and so to believe the truth.

If faith be a duty, believing is a holy exercise of the mind; for what else is holiness but a conformity of mind to the revealed will of God? Mr. M. allows of a belief which is "merely natural," and that it has "no holiness in it." He also allows that that which has the promise of salvation is holy. So far then we seem to be agreed. Yet, when he comes to state wherein its holiness consists, he seems to resolve every thing into the cause, and the nature of the truth believed—p. 57. Each of these, indeed, affords proof of the holy nature of faith; but to say that it consists in either is to place the nature of a thing in its cause, and in the object on which it terminates. The objects of belief are exactly the same as those of unbelief; but it will not be alleged, I presume, that unbelief is a holy exercise!

The sum is, Mr. M. thinks he ascribes duty and holiness to faith; but his hypothesis is inconsistent with both. And this is all that I ever meant to charge him with. It never was in my heart to "impeach his honesty;" (p. 64,) though he has more than once impeached mine.

Thirdly: On this principle, calls, invitations, and exhortations to believe have no place in the Christian ministry. To call, invite, or exhort a man to that in which his

will has no concern is self-evident absurdity. Every man must feel it, if he only make the experiment. Mr. Sandeman is aware of this, and therefore utterly gives up the practice, declaring that the whole of what he has to offer is evidence. He says, "I would set before him (the sinner) all the evidence furnished me by the gospel. Thus and thus only, would I press, call, invite, exhort, or urge him to believe."\* That is, he would not press, call, invite, exhort, or urge him to believe at all. So far he is consistent with himself, though at the utmost variance with the scriptures.

God, however, by the prophets and apostles, did not barely offer evidence, but addressed every power and passion of the human mind. Mr. Sandeman may call this "human clamor, pressing men on to the blind business of performing some task called believing;" but this will prove nothing but his dexterity, when pressed with an argument which he cannot answer, at turning it off by railery. The clamor of the prophets and apostles was such as follows: "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you even the sure mercies of David."

If this figurative language should be thought to leave the subject in doubt, the following verses express the same sentiments without a figure: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." "Ho every one that thirsteth, let him come unto me and drink!" "While

\* Epistolary Correspondence p. 8.



ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." "Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life." "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep." "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech (men) by us, we pray (them) in Christ's stead (saying) be ye reconciled to God."

Mr. Sandeman may tell us that the character of ambassadors does not belong to ordinary ministers, and may attribute the invitations used in the present day to "priestly pride, and strutting self importance;" but this will only prove that he has reasoned himself into a situation from which he has no other way of extricating himself than by having recourse to abuse instead of argument. What does it avail him, whether ordinary ministers be ambassadors for Christ, or not? If faith be a mere passive reception of the truth, it were as improper for the apostles to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, as for ordinary ministers to do so. Extraordinary powers could not render that consistent which is in itself absurd.

But I need say the less on this head as Mr. McLean in the First Part of his *Thoughts on the Calls and Invitations of the Gospel*, has not only alleged the foregoing passages, with others, but shown their connection and pertinency to the point at issue. Suffice it for me to say that a system which requires the disuse of the most distinguished means pertaining to the ministry of the word must be fundamentally erroneous, and of a tendency to render the good news of salvation of none effect.\*

\* It becomes me here to acknowledge that, in the Appendix to the last edition of *The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation*, I was guilty of an oversight, in attributing many of the foregoing sentiments to Mr. McLean, which did not belong to him. This mis-statement was owing to my having, at the time, entirely forgot his piece on the *Calls of the Gospel*, and my considering an anonymous performance, entitled *Simple Truth*, written by a Mr. Bernard, as his. It is true I had the means of knowing better, and should have been more attentive to them: in this, however lay the whole of my fault. It never was my design, for a moment, to misrepresent Mr. M. or any other man; nor did I ever feel the least reluctance to make the most explicit acknowledgment.

I may add, though I am sorry that I mistook him, yet I am glad I was mistaken. The difference between us is so much the less, which, to any one who wishes to unite with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, as far as possible, must afford a degree of satisfaction.

"To urge unbelievers," says Mr. Sandeman, "to any shadow of obedience to the gospel, as preparative to justification by faith, can have no other effect than to lead them to establish their own righteousness, and to stand in awe of the preacher."\* Obedience to the gospel, in Mr. Sandeman's view, is the effect of faith; the scriptures, however, as we have seen, make faith itself to be obedience, and unbelief to be disobedience. If, by "preparative," he means any thing which contributes to the ground or reason of justification, what he says of its self-righteous tendency is true; and the same would be true of his "notion," or "bare belief;" but to represent obedience to the gospel as necessary in the established order of things to justification is to represent it according to the whole current of scripture, as is manifest from the foregoing passages; and this can have no self-righteous tendency.

He that believeth *worketh not in respect of justification*. He does not deserve what he obtains, but receives it as a free gift; and it is of the nature of faith so to receive it. We can distinguish between a man who lives by his labors and one that lives by alms; and, without denying that the latter is active in receiving them, can clearly discern that his mode of living is directly opposed to that of the other. He that should contend that living by alms actively received was the same thing as living by works would not be reckoned a reasoner but a driveller.

To set ourselves against the practice of the prophets and apostles in order to support the freeness of justification, is supporting the ark with unhallowed hands; or, as Mr. McLean expresses it, *replying against God*. "Cannot the wicked," continues he, "be exhorted to believe, repent, and seek the Lord, and be encouraged to this by a promise of success, (Isa. lv. 6, 7,) without making the success to depend on human merit? Are such exhortations and promises always to be suspected of having a dangerous and self-righteous tendency? Instead of taking them in their plain and simple sense, must our main care always be to guard against some supposed self-righteous use of them, till we have explained away their whole force and spirit, and so distinguished and refined upon them as to make men more afraid to comply with them than to reject them, lest they should be guilty of some exertion of mind or body, some good disposition or motion towards Christ which is supposed to be the highest wickedness and a despising of the work of Christ?"†

\* Epistolary Correspondence, p. 29.

† Thoughts on Calls, &c., p. 36.

I can assure you that, while I feel sorry to have mistaken Mr. M'Lean on this subject, I am not a little happy in being able to make such important extracts as the above from his writings. Yet, when I think of some of the principles which he still avows, I feel concerned at what appears to me his inconsistency; and not merely his, but that of many others whom I sincerely esteem.

If, after what has passed, I could hope for a candid attention, I would entreat Mr. M. and others like-minded with him, to consider whether that practical neglect of calls and invitations to the unconverted which is said to prevail wherever these sentiments are imbibed, and which he almost acknowledges to have attended his own ministry, has not arisen from his cause.\* So long as he considers faith as something in which the will is concerned, instead of my being surprised at his feeling a difficulty in carrying the principles pleaded for in his *Thoughts on the Calls of the Gospel* into execution, I should be much more surprised at the contrary. If he be able to exhort sinners to repent and believe the gospel, it is more than I should be with his professed principles. So far as I know myself, I could not possibly call or invite any man to that in which his will had no concern, without feeling at the same time that I insulted him.

It may seem a little remarkable that this system, and that of the high or Hyper-Calvinists in England, which in almost all other things are opposite, should on this point be agreed. The one confines believing to the understanding, the other represents sinners, awakened sinners at least, as being willing to believe, but unable to do so, any more than to take wings and fly to heaven. Hence neither of them holds it consistent to call on sinners to believe in Christ, nor is it consistent with their principles; but how it is that they do not perceive, by the uniform practice of Christ and his apostles, that these principles are antisciptural, I cannot otherwise account for than by ascribing it to the perverting influence of hypothesis.

#### LETTER IV.

##### *On the faith of devils and nominal Christians.*

You are aware that the apostle James speaks of some whose faith was dead, being

alone; and that, in answer to their boastings, he reminded them that the devils also believed and trembled. Hence, it has been generally thought, there must be an essential difference between the *nature* of the faith of nominal Christians and devils on the one hand and that of true Christians on the other. But this would overturn a leading principle of the Sandemanian system. Its advocates, therefore, have generally contended that, "whosoever among men believes what devils do, about the Son of God, is born of God and shall be saved;"\* and that the design of the apostle was not to compare but rather to *contrast* it with that of the nominal Christian; the latter as having no effect on the mind, the former as causing its subjects to tremble. It has also been commonly maintained, on that side of the question, that the faith of which the apostle James speaks, instead of being of a different *nature* from that of true Christians, was in reality nothing but profession, or "*saying* I have faith." "The design of the apostle," it has been said, "is to represent that faith, whether it be on earth or in hell, if it really existed and was not merely pretended or professed, was always productive of corresponding works."

As the whole argument seems to rest upon the question whether the faith of nominal Christians be here compared to that of devils or contrasted with it, and as the solution of this question involves a fundamental principle of the system, it is worthy of a particular examination.

The words of the apostle are as follows: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead."

If the design be to *contrast* the faith of devils with that of nominal Christians, the apostle must undoubtedly mean to render the latter a nonentity, or a mere pretence, and to hold up the former as a reality; and, what is more, to represent the "trembling" of the fallen spirits as a species of good fruit, good at least in its nature, and wanting nothing to render it saving but the cir-

\* His words are, "However negligent I may be in urging sinners to repentance, it has always been my firm belief that not only the unconverted, but even the converted themselves, need often to be called to repentance and that in order to forgiveness." Reply, p. 36.

\* Eeking's Essays, p. 137.



cumstantial interference of a more favorable situation.

To this view of the passage I have several objections.

First: The apostle does not treat the faith of nominal Christians as a nonentity, but as something which existed, though void of life, as "a dead body without the spirit." On the principle here opposed there is no such a thing as a dead faith; that which is so called being mere pretence. The party is, indeed, represented as saying he has faith, but the same may be alleged of the true Christian with respect to works, James, ii. 18. If hence, the faith of the one he considered as a nonentity, the works of the other must be the same.

Secondly: The place in which the faith of devils is introduced proves that it is for the purpose of *comparison* and not of *contrast*. If it had been for the latter it should have been introduced in verse 18, and classed with the operative belief of true Christians, rather than in verse 19, where it is classed with that of nominal Christians. The argument then would have been this: "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works: the devils believe and tremble; but thou believest and tremblest not: therefore thy faith is a mere pretence."

Thirdly: The copulative particle "also," instead of the disjunctive, determines it to be a comparison and not a contrast. If it were the latter, the argument requires it to have been thus expressed: "Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well: *but* the devils believe and tremble." If καὶ be rendered *and* or *even*, instead of *also*, as it often is, yet the meaning is the same. "Thou believest there is one God: thou doest well; *and* the devils believe and tremble," or *even* the devils believe and tremble." None of these forms of expression conveys the idea of contrast but of likeness.

Judge, my friend, and let the reader judge, whether the meaning of the apostle be not expressed in the following paraphrase: Show me, if thou canst, a faith which is of any value without works, and I will show thee a faith which is of value by its fruits. Thou believest that there is one God; a great matter truly! and may not the same be said of the worst of beings! yea, and more: for they, having felt the power of God's anger, not only believe but tremble; whereas thy faith suffers thee to live at ease. But as theirs, with all their trembling, is of no account, neither is thine; for faith without holy fruits is dead.

If the language of the apostle may be understood as a *contrast*, it may be used to express that which subsists between other things that differ as well as these. For example: Between the faith of Christians and

that of Jews. But the absurdity of this would strike any reader of common discernment. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well:" Christians *also* believe and obey! To make sense of it, it should be, *But* Christians believe and obey. On the other hand, make an experiment in an instance of *likeness*, and the language is plain and easy. One boasts that he is not a heathen, nor a Jew, nor a deist, but a Christian; while yet he is under the dominion of avarice. A man might say to him, "Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well?" Felix the heathen was so far convinced of this, and, what is more, trembled: yet Felix's convictions were of no value, and brought forth no good fruit; neither are thine, for faith without works is dead.

There is no reason to conclude that the faith and trembling of devils differ in any thing, except in degree, from the conviction and trembling of Felix: If, therefore the former would in our circumstances have terminated in salvation, why did not the latter, whose situation was sufficiently favorable, so terminate? The convictions of James' nominal Christians might not be so strong as those of Felix; and his might not be so strong as those of the fallen angels: but in their *nature* they were one and the same. The first was convinced that there was one God; but it was mere light without love. If, like what is said of the stony-ground hearers, a portion of joy at first attended it, yet, the gospel having no root in his mind, and being in circumstances wherein he saw no remarkable displays of the divine majesty, it made no durable impression upon him. The second might also be convinced that there was a God, and neither were his convictions accompanied by love, but "righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come," being set before him, he "trembled." The last are convinced of the same truth and neither are their convictions accompanied by love; but, being placed in circumstances wherein the awful majesty of God is continually before their eyes, they already know in part, by sad experience, the truth of his threatenings, and tremble in expectation of greater torments.

There is just as much holiness in each of these cases as in the trembling of an impenitent malefactor under the gallows. To reckon it in any of them, therefore, among "the corresponding fruits which always attend faith if it really exists," is to reckon as fruit that which the scriptures reject as unworthy of the name. Of the four sorts of hearers, only one brought forth fruit.

It is remarkable that Mr. M'Lean, after what he has written, when discoursing on the parable of the sower, particularly on those who are said to have "believed for a while," should introduce the following sen-

siment in the form of an *objection*:—"Such as fall away have never been enlightened in the knowledge of the truth, nor really believed the gospel; but had only professed to believe." His answer to this objection is still more remarkable. "The scripture," he says, "Supposes them to have been once enlightened; to have received the knowledge of the truth, and of the way of righteousness; to have believed for a while; and to have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. See Heb. vi. 4; x. 26. Luke viii. 13. 2 Peter ii. 20. And their falling away after such attainments is that which constitutes the very sin of apostacy and by which the guilt of it is aggravated. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."—*Sermons*, p. 66.

All this I account very good, though I should not have expected it from Mr. M. But his refusing after this to admit an *essential* difference between the faith of the apostates and that of true believers is most remarkable of all. If the difference lie not in the nature of their faith, nor in the nature of the things believed, against which he also reasons, where does it lie? They must one would think, have been true believers so far as they went, and so long as they continue to believe; and their falling away must afford an example of the apostacy of true believers. But, if a person may be a true believer at one time and an apostate at another, he can have no scriptural ground at any period of his life, from any consciousness of believing the gospel, to conclude on his own particular salvation. Yet this is what Mr. M. has pleaded for in his treatise on the *Commission*. Moreover, if there be not an *essential* difference between the nature of the faith of apostates, and that of true believers, why does he himself when describing them, write as follows? "Whatever appearances of faith there may be in false professors, they have not the same perception of the truth, nor that persuasion of it upon its proper evidence, which real believers have."—*Works*, Vol. II. p. 96. I do not say of Mr. M., as he does of me, that "he can take either side of the question as he finds occasion:" but this I say, he appears to me to feel the force of some truths which do not well comport with some of his former reasonings; and not being able, it should seem, to reconcile them, he leaves them unreconciled.

Surely it were more agreeable to the truth, and to the passages on which he discourses, to admit of an *essential* difference between the faith of nominal and real Christians. In discoursing on the "good

ground" in the parable, he very properly represents true believers, and them only, as being "taught by the special illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit;" but surely that which is the fruit of this special influence possesses a special *nature*. Why else do we read that "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit?" and why does it denominate a man spiritual? 1 Cor. ii. 15. We may not, as he says, be "able to distinguish, in the first impressions of the gospel, the faith of a stony-ground hearer from that of a true believer;" but it does not follow that there is not an *essential* difference notwithstanding.

The unrenewed character, with all his knowledge, *knoweth nothing as he ought to know*. He perceives not the intrinsic evil of sin, and, consequently, discerns not the intrinsic excellence of the knowledge of Christ. That in the gospel which pleases him is its *giving* relief to his troubled conscience. Hence "all his godliness," as Mr. Sandeman says, "consists in love to that which first relieved him."

We have been told more than once that "there need be no question about *how* we believe, but *what* we believe." Mr. M'Lean will answer this, that "the *matter* or *object* of belief, even in apostates, is said to be the word of the kingdom; the truth; the way of righteousness; the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and what other object of faith have true believers?"—*Sermons*, pp. 66, 67.

I have no objection to allowing, however, that, if we believe the very truth as it is in Jesus, there can be nothing wanting in the *manner* of believing it. But though this be true, and though an inquirer after the way of salvation ought to be directed to the saving doctrine of the cross, rather than to the workings of his own mind concerning it, yet there *is* in the workings of a believer's mind towards it something essentially different from those of the merely nominal Christian; and which, when the inquiry comes to be, "Am I a believer?" ought to be pointed out. He not only believes truths which the other does not, but believes the same truths in a different manner. In other words, he believes them on different grounds, and with different affections. That which he knoweth is, in measure, "as he ought to know it." He discerns spiritual things *in a spiritual manner*; which is the only manner in which they can be discerned as they are.

It might be said there need be no question about *how* we repent, or hope, or love, or pray; but *what* we repent of; what we hope for, what we love, and what we pray for. And true it is, that if we repent of sin as sin, hope for the things which the gospel promises, love the true character of God and all that bears his image, and pray for those things which are according to his will,



there will be nothing wanting as to the manner: but it does not follow that there is no difference as to the manner of these exercises in true Christians and in merely nominal ones. Our being right as to the objects may be a *proof* of our being right as to the manner, as the needle's pointing to the magnet proves the correspondence of the nature of the one with that of the other; but, as in this case we should not say it is of no account whether the needle be made of steel or of some other substance, so that it points to the magnet, neither in the other should we consider the nature of spiritual exercises as a matter of no account, but merely the objects on which they terminate.

When we read concerning the duty of prayer that "the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him *in truth*," and that "we know not what to pray for *as we ought*," we infer that there is something in the nature of a good man's prayers which distinguishes them from other. But there is just the same reason for inferring that there is something in the nature of a good man's knowledge which distinguishes it from that of others; for, as he only that is assisted by the Holy Spirit prays *as he ought*, so he only that is taught of God knoweth anything *as he ought to know*.

The holy nature of living faith may be difficult, and even impossible, to be ascertained but by its effects; as it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish some seeds from others till they have brought forth their respective fruits; but a difference there *is*, notwithstanding. If there need be no inquiry as to the nature of faith, but merely concerning its objects, how was it that the Corinthians, who by their unworthy spirit and conduct, had rendered their being Christ's disciples *indeed* a matter of doubt, should be told to *examine themselves* whether they were in the faith, and should be furnished with this criterion, that if they were true believers, and not reprobates, or such as would be disapproved as dross, *Jesus Christ was in them*? On the principle here opposed they should have examined, not themselves, but merely their creed, or *what* they believed, in order to know whether they were in the faith.

If the faith of devils would have issued in their salvation, provided, like us, they had been placed in circumstances of hope, it will follow that faith is not produced by the grace of the Holy Spirit, but merely by Divine Providence. No one, I presume, will ascribe the belief of devils to the Holy Spirit: whatever they believe must be owing to the situation in which they are placed, and the circumstances attending them. But, if faith may be the mere effect of situation and circumstances in one case, why

not in another? Sandemanians have often been charged with setting aside the work of the Spirit, and have often denied the charge: but, whatever may be said of their other principles, their notion of the faith of devils must sap the foundation of that important doctrine. If this notion be true, all that is necessary is that the party be placed under the influence of truth clearly stated and sufficiently impressive, and within the limits of the promise of salvation. All the change, therefore, which is necessary to eternal life may be wrought by only a proper adjustment of moral causes. Only place mankind in circumstances in which their minds shall be impressed with terror equal to that of the fallen angels, and let the promise of salvation to believers be continued as it is, and all would be saved. And, with respect to the fallen angels themselves, only extend to them the promise to believers, and they are at once in a state of salvation. Such on this hypothesis, would have been the happy condition of both men and devils: but the hope of mercy and the sense of wrath are both rendered abortive for want of being united. Providence places sinners on earth under the hope of salvation; but then they are not in circumstances sufficiently impressive, and so it comes to nothing. In hell the circumstances are sufficiently impressive, and they actually believe; but then there is no hope, and so again it comes to nothing!

Surely the parable of the rich man and Lazarus might suffice to teach us the insufficiency of all means to bring sinners to God, when we are assured that if they believed not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead. I am far from accusing all who have pleaded for the faith of devils being such as would be saving in our circumstances as *designing* to undermine the work of the Spirit; but that such is its tendency is, I presume, sufficiently manifest.

Nor is this all: not only is the influence of the Spirit set aside, in favor of the mere influence of moral suasion, but *the fruits of the Spirit* are made to consist of that which is the ordinary effect of such influence. "When any person on earth," it has been said, "believes Jesus (who is now invisible) with equal assurance as the devils, he rejoices in hope, is animated by love to him, and feels disposed to obey his will, and to resist his own evil inclinations."

There are, I grant, sensations in the human mind which arise merely from the influences of hope and fear, and which bear a near resemblance to the fruits of the Spirit; but they are not the same. The judgments of God inflicted upon the carnal Israelites in the wilderness caused the survivors to tremble, and wrought in them a

great care to be more religious, and to resist their evil inclinations. "When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned early after God; they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer." Such was the effect of moral influence, or of the word and works of God; but what follows? "Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; *for their heart was not right with him*, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." Thus on the approach of death, we still see men greatly affected. Light as they may have made of religion before, they now believe enough to make them tremble. At such times it is common for them to think how good they would be, and what a different life they would lead, if it would please God to restore them. And, should a favorable turn be given to their affliction, they are affected in another way; they weep, and thank God for their hopes of recovery, not doubting but they shall become other men. But I need not tell you, or the reader, that all this may consist with a heart at enmity with the true character of God, and that it frequently proves so, by their returning as soon as the impression, subsides, to their old courses. The whole of this process may be no more than an operation of self-love, or, as Mr. Sandeman calls it, "a love to that which relieves them, which is something at a great remove from the love of God, and therefore is not "godliness." Godliness has respect to God, and not merely to our own relief. The distress of an ungodly mind, consisting only in a fearful apprehension of consequences may be relieved by any thing that furnishes him with a persuasion of the removal of those consequences. It may be from an idea that he has performed the conditions of salvation; or from an impulse that his sins are forgiven; or from his imagining that he "sees God just in justifying him, ungodly as he stands." Any of these considerations will give relief; and no man will be so wanting to himself as not to "love that which relieves him." There may be some difference in these causes of relief: the former may be derived from something in ourselves; and the latter may seem to arise from what Christ has done and suffered: but, if the undertaking of Christ be merely viewed as a relief to a sinner, we overlook its chief glory; and the religion that arises from such views is as false as the views themselves are partial.

The first idea in the doctrine of the cross is, "*Glory to God in the highest.*" Its proclaiming "*peace on earth, and good will to men.*" is consequent on this. But that which occupies the first place in the doctrine itself must occupy the first place in the belief of it.

The faith of the gospel corresponds with the gospel: "So we preached, and so ye believed." God will assert his own glory, and we must subscribe to it, before we are allowed to ask or hope for the forgiveness of our sins; as is clearly taught us in what is called the Lord's prayer. He, therefore, that views the cross of Christ merely as an expedient to relieve the guilty, or only subscribes to the justice of God in his condemnation, when conceiving himself delivered from it, has yet to learn the first principles of Christianity. His rejoicing in the justice of God, *as satisfied by the death of Christ*, while he hates it in itself considered, is no more than rejoicing in a dreaded tyrant being appeased, or somehow diverted from coming to hurt him. And shall we call this the love of God? To make our deliverance from divine condemnation the condition of our subscribing to the justice of it proves, beyond all contradiction, that we care only for ourselves, and that the love of God is not in us. And herein, if I may adopt Mr. Sandeman's term consists the very "poison" of his system. It is one of the many devices for obtaining relief to the mind, without justifying God, and falling at the feet of the Saviour; or which is the same thing, without "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

The doctrine of the cross presupposes the equity and goodness of the divine law, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the exposedness of the sinner to God's righteous curse, and his utter insufficiency to deliver his soul. To believe this doctrine, therefore, must needs be to subscribe with our very heart to these principles, as they respect ourselves; and so to receive salvation as being what it is, a message of pure grace, through a mediator. Such a conviction as this never possessed the mind of a fallen angel, nor of a fallen man untaught by the special grace of God.

#### LETTER V.

*On the connection between repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

THE advocates of this system do not consider the order in which these graces are ordinarily introduced in the New Testament as being the true order of nature, and therefore generally reverse it, putting faith before repentance, and invariably placing repentance among the effects of faith. A sinner, therefore, has no spiritual sense of the evil of sin, till he has believed in the Saviour, and stands in a justified state. Then, being forgiven all trespasses, and reconciled to God through the death of his Son, he is melted into repentance.



The question is not whether the gospel, when received by faith, operates in this way; for of this there can be no doubt. Nothing produces godly sorrow for sin like a believing view of the suffering Saviour. Nor is it denied that to be grieved for having dishonored God we must first believe that he is; and, before we can come to him in acceptable worship, that through a mediator he is "the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Without a mediator, repentance, even if it could have existed, must have been hopeless. I have not such an idea of the sinner being brought to repentance, antecedently to his believing in Christ for salvation, as Mr. Sandeman had of his believing antecedently to repentance. According to him, he believes and is justified, not merely *considered* as ungodly, or *without any consideration of godliness* in him, but actually "ungodly as he stands," and then, and not till then, begins to love God, and to be sorry for his sin. This is manifestly holding up the idea of an *impenitent believer*, though not of one that continues such. But the antecedency which I ascribe to repentance does not amount to this. I have no conception of a sinner being so brought to repentance as to sustain the *character* of a penitent, and still less to obtain the forgiveness of sin, previously to his falling in with the way of salvation. I believe it is not possible for a sinner to repent, and at the same time to reject the Saviour. The very instant that he perceives the evil of sin so as to repent of it, he cannot think of the Saviour without believing in him. I have, therefore, no notion of a *penitent unbeliever*. All that I contend for is, that, in the order of cause and effect, whatever may be said as to the order of time, repentance precedes as well as follows the faith of Christ; and that faith in Christ cannot exist without repentance for sin. A sense of sin appears to me essential to believing in the Saviour; so much so that, without it, the latter would not only be a mere "notion," but an essentially defective one.

It is admitted, on both sides, that there is a priority of one or other of these graces in the order of nature, so as that one is influenced by the other; and, if no other priority were pleaded, neither the idea of a penitent unbeliever on the one hand, nor an impenitent believer on the other, would follow; for it might still be true, as Mr. McLean acknowledges, that "none believe who do not repent," and, as I also acknowledge, that none repent who, according to the light they have, do not believe. But if we maintain, not only that faith is prior in the order of nature, but that, antecedently to any true sorrow for sin we must "see God to be just in justifying us ungodly as we stand," this

is clearly maintaining the notion of an impenitent believer.

From these introductory remarks, it will appear that I have no objection to faith being considered as contemporary with repentance in the order of time, provided the latter were made to consist in an acquiescence with the gospel-way of salvation, so far as it is understood; but, if it be made to include such a clear view of the gospel as necessarily brings peace and rest to the soul, I believe that repentance for sin often precedes it, even in the order of time.

Such is the connection between repentance and faith in the scriptures that the one commonly supposes the other. Repentance, when followed by the remission of sins, supposes faith in the Saviour (Luke xxiv. 47;) and faith when followed with justification, equally supposes repentance for sin.

Attempts have been made, by criticising on the word *peravonia* to explain away, as it should seem, the proper object of repentance, as if it were a *change of mind* with regard to the gospel. "Repentance," says Mr. S., "is the change of a man's mind to love the truth, which always carries in it a sense of shame and regret at his former opposition to it."\* But this is confounding repentance and faith objectively considered. The objects of both are so marked in the apostolic ministry, that one would think they could not be honestly mistaken. Repentance is *toward God*, and faith is *toward our Lord Jesus Christ*: the one has immediate respect to the Law-giver, the other to the Saviour.

It cannot be denied that the order in which the New Testament commonly places repentance and faith is in direct opposition to what our opponents plead for; and, what is more than the former is represented as influencing the latter. This is manifest in the following passages: Repent ye, and believe the gospel." "Testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." "They repented not, *that they might believe him*." "If God peradventure might give them repentance *to the acknowledging of the truth*." Mr. Sandeman, Mr. M'L. and all the writers on that side of the question, very rarely make use of this language; and, when they have occasion to write upon the subject, ordinarily reverse it. To accord with their ideas it should have been said, Believe the gospel and repent. Testifying faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance toward God. They believed not, that they might repent. If God peradventure may give them faith to repent.

\* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 408.

To this I add, it is impossible, in the nature of things, to believe the gospel but as being made sensible of that which renders it necessary. The guilty and lost state of sinners goes before the revelation of the grace of the gospel: the latter, therefore, cannot be understood or believed, but as we are convinced of the former. There is no grace in the gospel, but upon the supposition of the holiness, justice, and goodness of the law. If God be not in the right, and we in the wrong; if we have not transgressed without cause, and be not fairly condemned, grace is no more grace, but a just exemption from undeserved punishment. And, as faith must needs correspond with truth, it is impossible that we should believe the doctrine of salvation by grace in an impenitent state of mind, or without feeling that we have forfeited all claim to the divine favor. We cannot see things but as they are to be seen: to suppose that we first believe in the doctrine of free grace, and then, as the effect of it, perceive the evil of sin, and our just exposedness to divine wrath, is like supposing a man first to appreciate the value of a physician, and by this means to learn that he is sick. It is true the physician may visit the neighborhood, or the apartments, of one who is in imminent danger of death, while he thinks himself mending every day; and this circumstance may be held up by his friends as a motive to him to consider of his condition, and to put himself under his care. It is thus that the coming of Christ, and the setting up of his spiritual kingdom in the world, were alleged as motives to repentance, both to Jews and Gentiles. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Repent ye therefore." "The times past of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." But as it would not follow in the one case that the sick man could appreciate the value of the physician till he felt his sickness, neither does it follow in the other that faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ precedes such a sense of the evil of sin as involves the first workings of repentance toward God.

To argue as some have done, from the motives of repentance being fetched from the gospel, that it supposes their believing the gospel ere they could repent, proves too much; for it is not to repentance only, but to faith, that the coming of Christ's kingdom is held up as a motive: but, to say that this supposes their belief of the gospel, is saying they must believe in order to believing.

That a conviction of sin (whether it include the first workings of repentance or not) is necessary to faith in Christ is a matter so evident that those who have de-

claimed most against it have not been able to avoid such a representation of things. It is remarkable that, when Mr. Sandeman comes to describe his "ungodly man," he always contrives to make him not only full of distress, but divested of all self-righteous pride: he represents him as conceiving that there are "none more ripe for hell than he, and as having no hope but in the great propitiation."\* Thus also Mr. Ecking, when describing a "mere sinner," represents him as one who "feels himself in a perishing condition, and is conscious that he deserves no favor."†

We must not say that repentance, or any degree of a right spirit, so precedes faith in Christ as to enter into the nature of it; but, if we will but call the sinner by a few hard names, we may describe him in coming to the Saviour as sensible of his utter unworthiness, as divested of self-righteousness, and as ripe for hell in his own eyes! In short, we may depict him as the publican who sought mercy under a humiliating sense of his utter unworthiness to receive it, so that we still call him ungodly. And to this we have no objection, so that it be understood of the character under which he is justified in the eye of the Lawgiver; but, if it be made to mean that at the time of his justification he is in heart an enemy of God, we do not believe it. If he be, however, why do not these writers describe him as an enemy ought to be described? They teach us elsewhere that "an attachment to self-righteousness is natural to man as depraved;" how then came these ungodly men to be so divested of it? Why are they not represented as thinking themselves in a fair way for heaven, and that if God does not pardon them he will do them wrong? Such is the ordinary state of mind of ungodly men or mere sinners, which is just as opposite to that which they are constrained to represent as the spirit of the pharisee was to that of the publican.

Mr. McLean will tell us that "this is that part of the scheme whereby persons, previously to their believing in Christ, are taught to extract comfort from their convictions."—*Reply*, p. 148. But, whatever Mr. M., may think or say, I hope others will give me credit when I declare that we have no idea of any well grounded comfort being taken antecedently to believing in Christ. The publican is described as humbling himself before God exalted him: but he did not derive comfort from this. If, instead of looking to the mercy of God, he had done this, it would have been a species of pharisaical self-exaltation. But it does not follow hence that there *was* nothing spiritually good in his self-abasement.

\* Letters on Theron and Aspasic, pp. 46, 48.

† Essays, p. 41.



But Mr. M. "believes a person may be so convicted in his conscience as to view himself *merely as a guilty sinner*; that is, as having no righteousness to recommend him to the favor of God; and that under such conviction his sense of the evil of sin will not be confined to its *punishment*; but his conscience or moral sense will tell him that he deserves punishment at the hands of a righteous God."—p. 149.

Mr. McLean admits, then, the necessity of conviction of sin previously, in the order of things, to faith in Christ; only there is no holiness and consequently no true repentance in it. I have allowed in Letter I. that many convictions are to be resolved into the mere operations of an enlightened conscience and do not issue in true conversion. I may add, I consider all conviction of sin which *does not in its own nature lead to the Saviour* as of this description. It matters not how deep the distress of a sinner may be, so long as it is accompanied by an unwillingness to be saved by mere grace through a mediator, there is no holiness in it, nor any thing that deserves the name of repentance. An enlightened conscience, I allow, will force us to justify God and condemn ourselves on many occasions. It was thus in Pharaoh when he said, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." And this his sense of the evil of sin might not be "confined to its *punishment*;" his "conscience or moral sense might tell him that he deserved punishment at the hand of a righteous God." So far then we are agreed. But if Pharaoh had had a *just* sense of the evil of sin it would not have left him where it did. There was an essential difference between what he saw by the terrors of God's judgment and what Paul saw when "sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful." Nor can I believe that any sinner was ever so divested of self-righteous hope as to consider himself *a mere sinner*, who yet continued to reject the Saviour; for this were the same thing as for him to have no ground to stand upon, either false or true; but he who submits not to the righteousness of God is, in some form or other, going about to establish his own righteousness.

There is, I apprehend, an important difference between the case of a person who, whatever be his convictions, is still averse from giving up every claim and falling at the feet of the Saviour, and that of one whose convictions lead him to take refuge in the gospel, *as far as he understands it*, even though at present he may have but a very imperfect view of it. I can clearly conceive of the convictions of the former as having no repentance or holiness in them, but not so of the latter. I believe repentance has begun to operate in many persons

of this description, who as yet have not found that peace or rest for their souls which the gospel is adapted to afford. In short, the question is whether there be not such a thing as *spiritual conviction*, or conviction which proceeds from the special influence of the Spirit of God, and which in its own nature invariably leads the soul to Christ. It is not necessary that it should be known by the party, or by others, to be so at the time, nor can it be known but by its effects, or till it *has led* the sinner to believe in Christ alone for salvation. But this does not prove but that it may exist. And when I read of sin by the commandment becoming exceedingly sinful; of our being through the law dead to the law, "that we might live unto God;" of the law being appointed as a school-master to bring us to Christ, "that we might be justified by faith," I am persuaded that it does exist, and that to say all spiritual conviction of sin is by means of the gospel, is antisciptural and absurd.

In places where the gospel is preached, and where persons have long heard it, it is not supposed that they are necessarily first led to think of the law, and of themselves as transgressors of it; and then, being convinced of the exceeding sinfulness of sin by it, are for the first time led to think of Christ. No, it is not the order of time, but that of cause and effect, for which I plead. It may be by thinking of the death of Christ itself that we are first led to see the evil of sin; but, if it be so, this does not disprove the apostolic doctrine, that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." If the death of Christ furnish us with this knowledge, it is *as honoring the precept and penalty of the law*. It is still, therefore, by the law, as exemplified in him, that we are convinced.

"A spirit of grace and supplication" was to be poured "upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem," in consequence of which they were to "look upon him whom they had pierced, and mourn as for an only son, and to be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Is this mourning described as following or as preceding their forgiveness? As preceding it. It is true they are said first to "look upon him whom they had pierced;" but this view of the death of the Saviour is represented as working only in a way of conviction and lamentation: the view which gave peace and rest to their souls follows upon their mourning, and is thus expressed: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

Judge, my friend, and let the reader judge, whether this account accords with our first viewing God as just, and justifying us ungodly as we stand, and then beginning to

love him, and to repent of our having sinned against him. Judge whether it does not rather represent things in this order: first, "a spirit of grace and supplication" is poured upon the sinner; next he is led to think of what he has done against the Lord and his Christ, and mourns over it in the bitterness of his soul, and then gets relief by washing, as it were, in the fountain of his blood. Such was doubtless the process under Peter's sermon. Acts ii. 37, 38.

On the connection of repentance and faith I am at a loss to ascertain Mr. M's sentiments. He says, indeed that I know them; and suggests that I must have intentionally misrepresented them.—*Reply*, p. 36. But, if they be so plain, I can only say, my understanding is more dull than he supposes; for I do not yet comprehend how he can make repentance, in all cases, a fruit of faith in Christ, and yet consider it as necessary to forgiveness. He acknowledges that "none believe who do not repent," (p. 39,) and that repentance is "necessary to forgiveness," (p. 36.) "But forgiveness, though not the same as justification, is yet an essential part of it; if, therefore, he allow repentance to be antecedent to forgiveness that is the same thing in effect as allowing it to be antecedent to justification, or that the faith by which we are justified includes repentance. Yet he makes faith to be such a belief as excludes all exercise of the will or affections, and consequently repentance for sin. He also considers repentance as an immediate effect of faith (p. 38,) and opposes the idea of any effect of faith being included in it as necessary, not merely as a procuring cause, but in the established order of things, to justification. But this, so far as I am able to understand things, is making repentance to follow upon forgiveness rather than necessary to it.

Mr. M'Lean adds, "Though repentance ought to be urged upon all who hear the gospel, and though none believe it who do not repent, yet I strongly suspect that it would be leading us astray to press repentance upon them *before* and in order to their believing the gospel."—p. 39. And why does he not suspect the same thing of pressing the belief of the gospel before and in order to, their repentance? If indeed the gospel were withheld from sinners till they actually repent; or if it were suggested that they should first become penitents, and then think of being believers, this would be leading them astray: and the same might be said on the other side. If exhortations to repentance were withheld till the sinner had actually believed, or it were suggested that he should first become a believer and then think of repenting, this would be as anti-scriptural as the other. But why should we not content ourselves with following the

examples of the New Testament?" "Repent and believe the gospel?" As Mr. M'Lean's placing faith before repentance does not require him to avoid telling sinners of the evil nature of sin till they have believed, nor to consider them as believers while they are impenitent, why does he impute such consequences to me, for placing repentance before faith?

Mr. M'Lean refers to a passage in the preface to the first edition of *The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation*, as favoring extravagant constructions. I had said, "No sort of encouragement or hope is held out in all the book of God to any sinner as *such* considered." That which I meant, at the time, was merely to disown that any sinner was encouraged to hope for eternal life without returning to God by Jesus Christ. Thus I explained it in my answer to *Philanthropos*; but, as I perceived the idea was not clearly expressed in the preface, and that the words were capable of an ill construction, I altered them in the second edition, and expressed my meaning as follows: "There is no dispute concerning who ought to be encouraged to consider themselves as entitled to the blessings of the gospel. Though sinners be freely invited to the participation of spiritual blessings, yet they have no interest in them, according to God's revealed will, while they continue in unbelief." I cannot consider Mr. M'Lean's other references to the first edition, after a second was in his hand, as fair or candid; and this appears to me unfair and uncandid in the extreme.

It has been common to distinguish repentance into legal and evangelical; and I allow there is a foundation in the nature of things for this distinction. The former arises from the consideration of our sin being a transgression of the holy, just, and good law of our Creator; the latter from the belief of the mercy of God as revealed in the gospel, and the consideration of our sin being committed notwithstanding, and even against it. But it appears to me to have been too lightly taken for granted that all true repentance is confined to the latter. The law and the gospel are not in opposition to each other: why then should repentance arising from the consideration of them be so opposite as that the one should be false and the other true?

If we wish to distinguish the false from the true, or that which needs to be repented of from that which does not, we may perhaps, with more propriety, denominate them *natural* and *spiritual*; by the former understanding that which the mere principles of unrenewed nature are capable of producing, and by the latter that which proceeds from the supernatural and renovating influence of the Spirit of God.



*Natural* repentance, thus defined, is sorrow for sin chiefly with respect to its consequences, accompanied, however, with the reproaches of conscience on account of the thing itself. It is composed of remorse, fear, and regret, and is often followed by a change of conduct. It may arise from a view of the law and its threatenings, in which case it hath no hope, but worketh death, on account of there being nothing but death held out by the law for transgressors. Or it may arise from a partial and false view of the gospel, by which the heart is often melted under an idea of sin being forgiven when it is not so; in this case it hath hope, but, this being unfounded, it notwithstanding worketh death in a way of self-deception.

*Spiritual* repentance is sorrow for sin as sin, and as sin committed against God. It may arise from a view of the death of Christ, through which we perceive how evil and bitter a thing it is, and, looking on him whom we have pierced, mourn as one mourneth for an only son. But it may also arise from the consideration of our sin being a transgression of the holy, just, and good law of God, and of our having dishonored him without cause. Such a sense of the evil nature of sin as renders it exceedingly sinful includes the essence of true repentance: yet this, in the apostle, did not arise from the consideration of the gospel, but of the commandment. It was therefore legal repentance: yet as its tendency was to render him "dead to the law" as a medium of justification, and to bring him to Christ for life, it was spiritual. It was repentance unto life.

The chief ground on which repentance toward God has been denied to precede faith in Christ, in the order of nature, is that no man can repent of sin till he entertain the hope of forgiveness. Nay, it has been said, "No man can repent unless he knows himself to be of God; and, as this cannot be known till he hath received Christ, faith must precede repentance." If the principle that supports this argument be true, we neither have, nor ought to have, any regard to God or man, but for our own sake. But, if so, the command ought not to have been, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself;" but thou shalt love thyself with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength, and thy God and thy neighbor so far as they are subservient to thee. Moreover, if so, the world, instead of being greatly depraved, is very nearly what it ought to be; for it is certainly not wanting in self-love, though it misses the mark in accomplishing its object.

Some have allowed "that it is our duty

to love God supremely, whether he save us or not; but that, nevertheless, the thing is impossible." If it be *physically* impossible it cannot be duty; for God requires nothing in respect of obedience but that we love him with all our strength. If it be only morally impossible, that is the same as its being so owing to the corrupt state of our minds. But we are not to suppose that God, in saving sinners, any more than in judging them, consults their depraved spirit, and adapts the gospel to it. On the contrary, it is the design of all that God does for us to restore us to a right spirit. His truth must not bend to our corruptions; but our hearts must be "inclined to his testimonies." So far, therefore, as any man is renewed by the Spirit of God, so far is he brought to be of God's mind, and does what he ought to do. God's law is written in his heart.

Farther: If the principle that supports this argument be true, it will hold good in reference to men, as well as to God. And is it true that a man who is under just condemnation for breaking the laws, and who has no hope of obtaining a pardon, ought not to be expected to repent for his crime, and, before he die, to pray God to bless his king and country? On this principle, all confessions of this kind are of necessity mere hypocrisy. Even those of the dying thief in the gospel, so far as they respect the justice of his doom from his countrymen, must have been insincere; for he had no hope of his sentence being remitted. What would an offended father say, if the offender should require, as the condition of his repentance, a previous declaration of forgiveness, or even of a willingness to forgive? A willingness to forgive might be declared, and it would heighten the criminality of the offender if after this he continued hardened; but for him to require it, and to avow that he could not repent of his sin upon any other condition, would be the height of insolence. Yet all this is pleaded for in respect of God. "If I be a father, where is mine honor?"

Besides, how is a sinner, to "know that he is of God," otherwise than as being conscious of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ? Till he is sorry at heart for having dishonored God, he is not of God, and therefore cannot know that he is so.

If some have gone into extremes in writing of "disinterested love," as Mr. McLean suggests, it does not follow that true religion has its origin in self-love. Most men, who make any pretence to serious Christianity, will allow that, if sin be not hated as sin, it is not hated at all: and why we should scruple to allow that, if God be not loved as God, he is not loved at all, I can-

not conceive. I am not surprised, however, that those who have been so long and so deeply imbued in a system, a leading principle of which is "that godliness consists in love to that which first relieves us," should write in the manner they do.

On some occasions, however, Mr. M. himself can say as much in favor of "disinterested love" as his opponent, and can represent that which arises from "a mere principle of self-love" as being of no value. "There may be some resemblances of repentance," he says, "in fear, remorse, and sorrow of mind, occasioned by sin; as in Cain, Judas, Felix, &c. But a mere principle of self-love will make a man dread the consequences of sin, while he has prevalent inclinations to sin itself. There is a difference between mere fear and sorrow on account of sin, and a prevalent hatred of it; between hatred of sin itself, and mere hatred of its consequences; between that sorrow for sin which flows from the love of God and of holiness, and that which flows from an inferior principle. Men may have even an aversion to some kinds of sin, because they interfere with others, or because they do not suit their natural constitutions, propensities, tempers, habits, age, worldly interests, &c., while they do not hate all sin universally, and consequently hate no sin, as such, or from a proper principle.—*Works*, Vol. ii. p. 95.

## LETTER VI.

### *On the connection between knowledge and disposition.*

You need not be told that this is a subject of prime importance in the Sandemanian system. It every where considers knowledge as the one thing needful, and disposition as its natural and proper effect.

Mr. M'Lean represents me as maintaining that the understanding or perceptive faculty in man is directed and governed by his will and inclinations; and this he supposes to be the principle on which my arguments are principally founded: a principle which can be true, he thinks, only in cases where the original order of things is perverted by sin.—*Reply* pp. 8, 9. Whether these sentiments be just, or contain a fair statement of my views, we shall inquire as we proceed: at present I only observe that the state of the will or disposition is, in Mr. M'Lean's account, governed invariably by the understanding; or, if in any instance it be otherwise, it is owing to the disorder introduced by sin. I should not have supposed, however, that sin could have perverted the established laws of na-

ture. It certainly perverts the *moral* order of things, that is (as Dr. Owen represents it, to whom Mr. M. refers,) instead of the will being governed by judgment and conscience, judgment and conscience are often governed by prejudice. But there is nothing in all this subversive of the established laws of nature; for it is a law recognized both by nature and scripture that the disposition of the soul should influence its decisions. A humble and candid spirit is favorable, and a proud and uncandid spirit is unfavorable, to a right judgment.

"It is a maxim," says Mr. Ecking, "that has not yet been refuted, that the determination of the will must evermore follow the illumination, conviction, and notice of the understanding."<sup>\*</sup> By the illumination, conviction, and notice of the understanding must be meant, either what the mind judges to be *right*, or what it accounts *agreeable*. If the will were always determined by the former, there could be no such thing as knowing the will of God and not doing it. But I suppose this will not be pretended. It must therefore be of the latter that Mr. Ecking writes. His meaning must be, that the will evermore follows the mind's view of the object as *agreeable*. But is it certain that the viewing of an object agreeable is properly and perfectly distinct from choosing it? President Edwards conceived it was not, and therefore did not affirm that the will was *determined* by the greatest apparent good, but merely that "the will always is as the greatest apparent good, or as what appears most agreeable is."<sup>†</sup> This is not saying that the will is determined by the understanding; for, as the same author goes on to prove, the cause of an object appearing agreeable to the mind may be "the state, frame, or temper of the mind itself." But so far as this is the case, the judgment is determined by the state of the mind rather than the state of the mind by the judgment.

A great deal of confusion on this subject has arisen from confounding simple knowledge, pertaining merely to the intellectual faculty, with that which is compound or comprehensive of approbation. The former is with propriety distinguished from whatever pertains to the state of the will; but the latter is not, seeing it includes it.

Mr. M'Lean, speaking of certain characters who had heard the gospel, says, "It is supposed that such men have now received some *information* which they had not before, both with respect to their danger and the remedy of it, and"—what? that their wills or dispositions are in that proportion changed? No: but "that they

<sup>\*</sup> *Essays*, p. 54.

<sup>†</sup> *On the Will*, Part I. Section II. p. 11.



are hereby rendered quite *inexcusable* if they should neglect so great salvation; which neglect must now be the effect of perverseness and aversion, and not of *simple* ignorance. John iii. 19; xv. 2, 25.\* I do not say of Mr. M., as he did of me when I was only reasoning upon the principles of my opponent, that "he can take either side of the question as he finds occasion:" but this I say, that, when writing in favor of the calls of the gospel he felt himself impelled to admit principles of which, in his controversy on the other side, he has quite lost sight. The above statement appears to me to be very just, and as he here so properly distinguishes *simple* ignorance from ignorance which arises from aversion or neglect—the one as tending to excuse, the other to criminate—he cannot consistently object to my distinguishing between *simple* knowledge, which barely renders men *inexcusable*, and knowledge *inclusive of approbation*, which has the promise of eternal life.

Simple knowledge, or knowledge as distinguished from approbation, is merely a natural accomplishment, necessary to the performance of both good and evil, but in itself neither the one nor the other. Instead of producing love, it often occasions an increasing enmity, and in all cases renders sinners the less excusable. In this sense the term *knowledge*, and others related to it, are used in the following passages: "The servant who knew his lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes,"—"When they knew God, they glorified him not as God." "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin." "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father."

But knowledge is much more frequently used in the scriptures as including approbation. The Lord is said to know the righteous, and never to have *known* the workers of iniquity. To understand this of simple knowledge would deprive God of his omniscience. As ascribed to men, it is what is denominated a spiritual understanding. It is not necessary to an obligation to spiritual duties, but it is necessary in the nature of things to the actual discharge of them. It may be said of the want of this, "The Lord hath not given you eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day;" and that without furnishing any excuse for the blindness of the parties. It is the wisdom from above imparted by the illuminating influence of the Holy spirit.

\* Thoughts on Calls, &c., p. 17.

That knowledge, in this sense of the term, produces holy affections is not denied, It is in itself holy, and contains the principle of universal holiness. It is that by which we discern the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, which glory being beheld assimilates us into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. But the question at issue respects knowledge in its simple and literal sense, or that which is purely intellectual, exclusive of all disposition; otherwise it would amount to no more than this, whether that which includes the seminal principles of holy affection (namely, a sense of heart) tends to produce it: which never was disputed.

The ground on which I am supposed to have proceeded is "that the understanding or perceptive faculty in man is directed and governed by his will;" but this is a mistake: I ground no doctrine upon any theory of the human mind which I may have entertained: but on what I consider as the scriptural account of things; in which I find spiritual perception impeded by evil disposition, and promoted by the contrary. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Neither is the above a fair statement of my views. If what I have written implies any theory of the human mind, it is not that the understanding is in all cases governed by the will; but rather that they have a mutual influence on each other. I have allowed, in my *Appendix*, that volitions are influenced by motives or considerations which exist in the view of the mind; and I should think it is equally evident, on the other hand, that our judgments are, in a great number of instances, determined by a previous state or disposition of the soul. In objects which do not interest the affections the judgment may be purely intellectual, and the choice may naturally follow according to its dictates; but it is not so in cases, as universal experience evinces.

"But must it not be owned," says Mr. M. in his Reply, "that, so far as this is the case in man, it is an *irregular* exercise of his faculties, arising from the moral disorder of his lapsed nature, whereby judgment, reason, and conscience are weakened, perverted, and blinded, so as to be subjected to his will and corrupt inclinations?"—p. 8. It must undoubtedly be owned that the influence of an evil disposition in producing an erroneous and false judgment is owing to this cause; and if that for which I plead were what Mr. M. elsewhere represents it, viz. a prejudice in favor of a report, which renders the mind regardless of evidence, (p. 67,) the same might be said of all such judgment. But how if the state of the will contended for should be that of a deliverance from prejudice, by which ev-

idence comes to be properly regarded? It is not to the disorder introduced by sin that we are to ascribe the general principle of the moral state or disposition of the soul having an influence on the judgment; for it is no less true that a humble, candid, and impartial spirit influences the belief of moral truth, or truth that involves in its consequences the devoting of the whole life to God, than that a selfish and corrupt spirit influences the rejection of it. Surely it is not owing to the human faculties being thrown into disorder that a holy frame of mind in believers enables them to understand the scriptures better than the best expositor! The experience of every Christian bears witness that the more spiritually minded he is the better he is prepared for the discernment of spiritual things.

Mr. McLean thinks I have mistaken the meaning of the term heart, in applying it to the dispositions and affections of the soul, as distinguished from the understanding. When such phrases as a heart of stone, a heart of flesh, a hard and impenitent heart, a tender heart, a heart to know the Lord, &c., occur, though they suppose the intellectual faculty, yet there can be no doubt, I should think, of their expressing the state of the will and affections, rather than of the understanding. I have no objection, however, to the account given of the term by Dr. Owen, that "it generally denotes the whole soul of man, and all the faculties of it, not absolutely, but as they are all one principle of moral operations, as they all concur in our doing good or evil." The term may sometimes apply to what is simply natural; but it generally, as he says, denotes the principle of moral action, which, being comprehended in love, must in all cases, whether it relate to good or evil, include affection. And thus in his *Treatise on Justice*, Dr. Owen observes that "assent is an act of the understanding only; but believing is an act of the heart, which in scripture comprises all the faculties of the soul as one entire principle of moral and spiritual duties. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness,' Rom. x. 10; and it is frequently described by an act of the will, though it be not so alone. But without an act of the will no man can believe as he ought. See John v. 40; i. 12; vi. 35. We come to Jesus Christ as an act of the will; 'and let whosoever will, come;' and to be willing is taken for believing. Ps. cx. 3. And unbelief is disobedience. Heb. iii. 18, 19."—*Chap. i. p. 108.*

Nay, Mr. McLean himself acknowledges nearly as much as this. He says, "The scriptures always represent the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the spirit as exerted upon the heart, which includes not only the understanding, but the will

and affections, or the prevalent inclinations and dispositions of the soul."—*Works*, Vol. ii. p. 91.

That disposition, in rational beings, presupposes perception, I never doubted; but that it is produced by it is much easier asserted than proved. Knowledge is a concomitant in many cases where it is not a cause. If all holy dispositions be produced by just perceptions, all evil disposition is produced by just or erroneous ones. Indeed, this is no more than Mr. McLean, on some occasions at least, is prepared to admit. He tells us that "the word represents the darkness, blindness, and ignorance of the mind, with regard to spiritual things, as the source of men's alienation from the life of God, and of their rebelling against him."—p. 77. Does he really think, then, that the passages of scripture to which he refers means simple ignorance? If not, they make nothing for his argument. Does he seriously consider the blindness or hardness of heart, in Ephes. iv. 18, as referring to ignorance, in distinction from aversion, or as including it? Can he imagine that the darkness in which Satan holds mankind is any other than a chosen and beloved darkness, described in the following passages? "They loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." "The heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes have they closed."

That voluntary blindness renders sinners estranged from God I can easily understand, nor am I at any loss to conceive of its being "that by which Satan reigns, and maintains his power over the minds of men;" but I do not perceive, in any of these facts, the proof of disposition having its origin in ignorance. Two friends, whom I will call Matthew and Mark, were one evening conversing on this subject, when the following sentiments were exchanged. All sin (said Matthew) arises from ignorance. Do you think then, (said Mark) that God will condemn men for what is owing to a want of natural capacity? O no, (said Matthew;) it is a *voluntary* ignorance to which I refer: a *not liking* to retain God in their knowledge. Then (said Mark) you reason in a circle; your argument amounts to this: All sin arises from ignorance, and this ignorance arises from sin; or, which is the same thing, from aversion to the light!

If Mr. McLean, or others, will maintain

\* Ephes. iv. 18, 19. Acts xxvi. 18. Ephes. vi. 12. Col. i. 13.

† *ἡσυχία* Parkhurst observes, is from *πῶσις* and signifies *hardness, callousness, or blindness*. "It is not mere ignorance," says Dr. Owen, "but a stubborn resistance of light and conviction; an obdurate hardness, whence it rejects the impressions of divine truth."—*Discourses of the Holy Spirit*, Book iii. Chap. iii.



that sin is the effect of *simple* ignorance (and this they must maintain, or what they hold is nothing different from that which they oppose,) let them seriously consider a few of its consequences, as drawn by some of our modern Infidels. It is on this principle that Mr. Godwin, in his treatise on *Political Justice*, denies the original depravity of human nature; explains away all ideas of guilt, crime, desert, and accountableness; and represents the devil himself as a being of considerable virtue. Thus he reasons:

"The moral characters of men originate in their perceptions. As there are no innate perceptions or ideas, there are no innate principles. The moral qualities of men are the produce of the impressions made upon them, and *there is no such thing as an original propensity to evil.*"—*Book i. Chap. iii.*

Again: "Vice is nothing more than error and mistake reduced to practice. Acting from an ill motive is acting from a mistaken motive. Under the system of necessity (that is, as held by him,) the ideas of *guilt, crime, desert, and accountableness, have no place.*"—*Book iv. Chap. iv.—vi. pp. 254, 314.*

Again: "Virtue is the offspring of the understanding. It is only another name for a clear and distinct perception of the value of the object. Virtue, therefore, is ordinarily connected with great talents. Cæsar and Alexander had their virtues. They imagined their conduct conducive to the general good. The devil, as described by Milton, also was a being of considerable virtue! Why did he rebel against his Maker? Because he saw no sufficient reason for that extreme inequality of rank and power which the Creator assumed. After his fall, why did he still cherish the spirit of opposition? From a persuasion that he was hardly and injuriously treated. He was not discouraged by the inequality of the contest!"—*Book iv. Chap. iv. App. No. 1. p. 261.*

Allowing this writer his premises, I confess myself unable to refute his consequences. If all sin be the effect of ignorance, so far from its being *exceedingly sinful*, I am unable to perceive any sinfulness in it. It is one of the clearest dictates in nature, and that which is suggested by every man's conscience, that whatever he does wrong, if he know no better, and his ignorance be purely intellectual, or, as Mr. M'Lean calls it, *simple*—that is, if it be not owing to any neglect of means, but to the want of means, or of powers to use them, it is not his fault.

The intellectual powers of the soul, such as perception, judgment, and conscience, are not that to moral action which the first

wheel of a machine is to those that follow; but that which light and plain direction are to a traveller, leaving him inexcusable if he walk not in the right way.

But I shall be told that it is not natural but spiritual knowledge for which Mr. M'Lean pleads, as the cause of holy disposition. True: but he pleads for it upon the general principle of its being the established order of the human mind that disposition should be produced by knowledge. Moreover, if spiritual knowledge should be found to include approbation, it cannot, with propriety, be so distinguished from it as to be a cause of which the other is the effect; for to say that all disposition arises from knowledge, and that that knowledge includes approbation, is to reason in a circle, exactly as, in the case just supposed, Matthew reasoned on all sin arising from ignorance, which ignorance *included aversion.*

That spiritual knowledge includes approbation in its very nature, and not merely in its effect, appears evident to me from two considerations. First: It is the opposite of spiritual blindness. 2 Cor. iv. 4—6; Ephes. v. 8. But spiritual blindness includes in its very nature, and not merely in its effect, an aversion to the truth. Mr. Ecking (whose *Essays on Grace, Faith, and Experience*, have been reprinted by the friends of this system, as containing what they account, no doubt, an able defence of their principles) allows the inability of the sinner to consist in his loving darkness rather than light, and his disinclination to depend on a holy sovereign God, and not in the want of rational faculties. Describing this inability in other words, he considers it as composed of "error, ignorance, and unbelief," in which he places the "disease" of the sinner, "*the very essence of the natural man's darkness;*" and the opposites of them he makes to be "truth, knowledge, and faith, which being implanted," he says, "the soul must be renewed."—pp. 66, 67.\* If Mr. E. understood what he wrote, he must mean to represent spiritual light as the proper opposite of spiritual darkness; and as he allows the latter, "*in the very essence of it, to include aversion,*" he must allow the former in the very essence of it to include approbation. Secondly: The objects perceived are of such a nature as to be known only by a sense of their divine excellency, which contains in it more than a simple knowledge, even an approbation of the heart. Those who have written upon the powers of the soul have represented "that whereby we receive ideas of beauty and harmony as having all the

\* I have only the first edition of Mr. E.'s *Essays*, and therefore am obliged to quote from it.

characters of a sense, an internal sense."\* And Mr. Ecking, after all that he says against a principle of grace in the heart antecedently to believing, allows that "we must have a spiritual principle before we can discern divine beauties."† But the very essence of scriptural knowledge consists in the discernment of divine beauties, or the *Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. To speak of faith in Christ antecedent to this is only to speak at random. The reason given why the gospel report was not believed is that, in the esteem of men, the Messiah had *no form nor comeliness in him, nor beauty, that they should desire him*. To say we must have a spiritual principle before we can discern divine beauties is, therefore, the same thing in effect as to say we must have a spiritual principle before we can believe the gospel.

I will close this letter by an extract from President Edwards's *Treatise on the Affections*, not merely as showing his judgment, but as containing what I consider a clear, scriptural, and satisfactory statement of the nature of spiritual knowledge.

"If the scriptures are of any use to teach us any thing, there is such a thing as a *spiritual supernatural understanding* of divine things that is peculiar to the saints, and which those who are not saints have nothing of. It is certainly a kind of understanding, apprehending, or discerning of divine things, that natural men have nothing of which the apostle speaks of in 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' It is certainly a kind of seeing or discerning spiritual things peculiar to the saints which is spoken of in 1 John iii. 6, 'Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him; 3 John ii., 'He that doeth evil hath not seen God;' and John vi. 40, 'This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.' Chap. xiv. 19, 'The world seeth me no more, but ye see me.' Chap. xvii. 3, 'This is eternal life that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Matt. xi. 27. 'No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' John xii. 45, 'He that seeth me seeth him that sent me.' Psal. ix. 10, 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.' Phil. iii. 8, 'I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' Verse 10, 'That I may know him.' And innumerable

other places there are, all over the Bible, which show the same. And that there is such a thing as an understanding of divine things, which in its nature and kind is wholly different from all knowledge that natural men have, is evident from this, that there is an understanding of divine things which the scripture calls spiritual understanding: Col. i. 9, 'We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.' It has already been shown that that which is *spiritual*, in the ordinary use of the word in the New Testament, is entirely different, in nature and kind, from all which natural men are or can be the subjects of.

"Hence it may be surely inferred wherein spiritual understanding consists. For if there be in the saints a kind of apprehension or perception which is, in its nature, perfectly diverse from all that natural men have, or that it is possible they should have, till they have a new nature; it must consist in their having a certain kind of ideas or sensations of mind which are simply diverse from all that is or can be in the minds of natural men. And that is the same thing as to say that it consists in the sensations of a *new spiritual sense*, which the souls of natural men have not, as is evident by what has been before once and again observed. But I have already shown what that new spiritual sense is which the saints have given them in regeneration, and what is the object of it. I have shown that the immediate object of it is the supreme beauty and excellency of the nature of divine things as they are in themselves. And this is agreeable to the scripture: the apostle very plainly teaches that the great thing discovered by spiritual light and understood by spiritual knowledge is the glory of divine things. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 'But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;' together with verse 6, 'for God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;' and Chap. iii. 18, but we all, with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' And it must needs be so, for, as has been before observed, the scripture often teaches that all true religion summarily consists in the love of divine things. And therefore that kind of understanding or knowledge which is the proper foundation of true religion must be the knowledge of the *loveliness of divine*

\* Chamber's Dictionary, Art. Sense.

† Essays, p. 67.



things. For, doubtless, that knowledge which is the proper foundation of love, is the knowledge of *loveliness*. What that beauty or loveliness of divine things is, which is the proper and immediate object of a spiritual sense of mind, was shown under the last head insisted on, viz: that it is the beauty of their moral perfection. Therefore it is in the view or sense of this that spiritual understanding does more immediately and primarily consist. And indeed it is plain it can be nothing else; for (as has been shown) there is nothing pertaining to divine things besides the beauty of their moral excellency and those properties and qualities of divine things which this beauty is the foundation of, but what natural men and devils can see and know, and will know fully and clearly to all eternity.

"From what has been said, therefore, we come necessarily to this conclusion, concerning that wherein spiritual understanding consists; viz: That it consists in a *sense of the heart of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of divine things together with all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion that depends upon and flows from such a sense.*

"Spiritual understanding consists primarily in a *sense of heart of that spiritual beauty*. I say a *sense of heart*; for it is not speculation merely that is concerned in this kind of understanding; nor can there be a clear distinction made between the two faculties of understanding and will, as acting distinctly and separately in this matter. When the mind is sensible of the sweet beauty and amiableness of a thing, that implies a sensibleness of sweetness and delight in the presence of the idea of it; and this sensibleness of the amiableness or delightfulness of beauty carries, in the very nature of it, the sense of the heart; or an effect and impression the soul is the subject of, as a substance possessed of taste, inclination, and will.

"There is a distinction to be made between a mere *notional understanding*, wherein the mind only beholds things in the exercise of a speculative faculty; and the *sense of the heart*, wherein the mind does not only speculate and behold, but *relishes and feels*. That sort of knowledge by which a man has a sensible perception of amiableness and loathsomeness, or of sweetness and nauseousness, is not just the same sort of knowledge with that by which he knows what a triangle is, and what a square is. The one is mere speculative knowledge; the other sensible knowledge; in which more than the mere intellect is concerned; the heart is the proper subject of it, or the soul as a being that not only beholds, but has inclination, and is pleased or displeased. And yet there is the nature of instruction in

it; as he that has perceived the sweet taste of honey knows much more about it than he who has only looked upon and felt of it.

"The apostle seems to make a distinction between mere speculative knowledge of the things of religion, and spiritual knowledge, in calling that 'the form of knowledge, and of the truth.' Rom. ii. 20, 'Which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.' The latter is often represented by relishing, smelling, or tasting; 2 Cor. ii. 14. 'Now thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge in every place.' Matt. xvi. 23, 'Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.' 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' Cant. i. 3, 'Because of the savor of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee;' compared with 1 John ii. 20, 'But ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things.'

"Spiritual understanding primarily consists in this sense, or taste of the moral beauty of divine things; so that no knowledge can be called spiritual any further than it arises from this, and has this in it. But, secondarily, it includes all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion which depends upon and flows from such a sense. When the true beauty and amiableness of the holiness, or true moral good, that is in divine things, is discovered to the soul, it as it were opens a new world to its view. This shows the glory of all the perfections of God, and of every thing appertaining to the Divine Being; for, as was observed before, the beauty of all arises from God's moral perfections. This shows the glory of all God's works both of creation and providence; for it is the special glory of them that God's holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness, are so manifested in them; and without these moral perfections there would be no glory in that power and skill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God's moral perfections is the special end of all the works of God's hands. By this sense of the moral beauty of divine things is understood the sufficiency of Christ as a mediator; for it is only by the discovery of the beauty of the moral perfections of Christ that the believer is let into the knowledge of the excellence of his person, so as to know any thing more of it than the devils do: and it is only by the knowledge of the excellence of Christ's person that any know his sufficiency as a mediator; for the latter depends upon and arises from the former. It is by seeing the excellence of Christ's person that the saints are made sensible of

the preciousness of his blood, and its sufficiency to atone for sin; for therein consists the preciousness of Christ's blood, that it is the blood of so excellent and amiable a person. And on this depends the meritoriousness of his obedience, and sufficiency and prevalence of his intercession. By this sight of the moral beauty of divine things is seen the beauty of the way of salvation by Christ; for that consists in the beauty of the moral perfections of God, which wonderfully shines forth in every step of this method of salvation from beginning to end. By this is seen the fitness and suitableness of this way; for this wholly consists in its tendency to deliver us from sin and hell, and to bring us to the happiness which consists in the possession and enjoyment of moral good, in a way sweetly agreeing with God's moral perfections. And, in the way's being contrived so as to attain these ends, consists the excellent wisdom of that way. By this is seen the excellency of the word of God: take away all the moral beauty and sweetness in the word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead letter, a dry lifeless, tasteless thing. By this is seen the true foundation of our duty; the worthiness of God to be so esteemed, honored, loved submitted to and served, as he requires of us, and the amiableness, of the duties themselves that are required of us. And by this is seen the true evil of sin; for he who sees the beauty of holiness must necessarily see the hatefulness of sin, its contrary. By this men understand the true glory of heaven, which consists in the beauty and happiness that is in holiness. By this is seen the amiableness and happiness of both saints and angels. He that sees the beauty of holiness, or true moral good, sees the greatest and most important thing in the world, which is the fulness of all things, without which all the world is empty, no better than nothing, yea worse than nothing. Unless this is seen, nothing is seen that is worth the seeing; for there is no other true excellency or beauty. Unless this be understood, nothing is understood that is worthy of the exercise of the noble faculty of understanding. This is the beauty of the godhead, and the divinity of divinity (if I may so speak,) the good of the infinite fountain of good; without which God himself (if that were possible to be) would be an infinite evil, without which we ourselves had better never have been, and without which there had better have been no being. He therefore, in effect, knows nothing, that knows not this. His knowledge is but the shadow of knowledge, or, as the apostle calls it, the form of knowledge. Well, therefore, may the scripture represent those who are destitute of that spiritual sense, by which is perceived the beauty of holiness, as totally blind, deaf and senseless; yea, dead. And

well may regeneration, in which this divine sense is given to the soul by its Creator, be represented as opening the blind eyes, and raising the dead, and bringing a person into a new world. For, if what has been said be considered, it will be manifest that, when a person has this sense and knowledge given him, he will view nothing as he did before: though before he *knew* all things after the flesh, yet henceforth he will 'know them so no more;' and he is become, 'a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new;' agreeably to 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.

"And, besides the things that have been already mentioned, there arises from this sense of spiritual beauty all true experimental knowledge of religion; which is of itself, as it were, a new world of knowledge. He that does not see the beauty of holiness, knows not what one of the graces of God's Spirit is; he is destitute of any idea or conception of all gracious exercises of soul, and all holy comforts and delights, and all effects of the saving influences of the Spirit of God on the heart; and so is ignorant of the greatest works of God, the most important and glorious effects of his power upon the creature; and also is wholly ignorant of the saints as saints; he knows not what they are: and in effect is ignorant of the whole spiritual world.

"Things being thus, it plainly appears that God's implanting that spiritual supernatural sense which has been spoken of makes a great change in a man. And were it not for the very imperfect degree in which this sense is commonly given at first, or the small degree of this glorious light that first dawns upon the soul; the change made by this spiritual opening of the eyes in conversion, would be much greater, and more remarkable, every way, than if a man who had been born blind, and with only the other four senses, should continue so a long time, and then at once should have the sense of seeing imparted to him, in the midst of the clear light of the sun, discovering a world of visible objects. For, though sight be more noble than any of the other external senses, yet this spiritual sense which has been spoken of is infinitely more noble than that, or any other principle of discerning that a man naturally has, and the object of this sense infinitely great and more important.

"This sort of understanding, or knowledge, is that knowledge of divine things whence all truly gracious affections do proceed: by which, therefore, all affections are to be tried. Those affections that arise wholly from any other kind of knowledge, or do result from any other kind of apprehensions of mind, are vain!"—pp. 225—232.



## LETTER VII.

*An inquiry whether, if believing be a spiritual act of the mind, it does not presuppose the subject of it to be spiritual.*

MR. SANDEMAN, and many of his admirers, if I understand them, consider the mind as passive in believing, and charge those who consider faith as an act of the mind with making it a work and so of introducing the doctrine of justification by a work of our own.

Mr. Ecking sometimes writes as if he adopted this principle; for he speaks of a person being "passive in receiving the truth."—p. 73. In another place, however, he is very explicit to the contrary. "Their notion is absurd," he says, "who, in order to appear more than ordinarily accurate, censure and solemnly condemn the idea of believing being an act of the mind. It is acknowledged, indeed, that very unscriptural sentiments have prevailed about *acts of faith*, when they are supposed to arise from some previous principle well disposing the minds of unbelievers toward the gospel. Yet, if it be admitted possible for the soul of man to act (and who will deny that it does?) there is nothing more properly an act of the mind than believing the truth; in which first the mind perceives it, then considers the evidence offered to support it, and, finally, gives assent to it. And can this comport with inactivity? We must either say, then, that the soul acts in believing the gospel, or that the soul is an inactive spirit, which is absurd."—p. 98. As Mr. E., in this passage, not only states his opinion, but gives his reasons for it, we must consider this as his fixed principle; and that which he says of the truth being "passively received" as expressive, not of faith, but of spiritual illumination *previously* to it. But, if so, what, does he mean by opposing a previous principle as necessary to believing? His acts of faith arise from spiritual illumination, which he also must consider as "well disposing the minds of unbelievers toward the gospel."

If there be any difference between him and those whom he opposes, it would seem to consist, not in the *necessity*, but in the *nature* of a previous change of mind; as whether it be proper to call it a principle, and to suppose it to include life as well as light. He no more considers the mind as discerning and believing the gospel without a previous change wrought in it by the Spirit of God than his opponents. Nay, as we have seen, he expressly, and, as he says, "readily acknowledges that we must have a spiritual principle before we can discern divine beauties."—p. 67. But, if a

spiritual principle be necessary to discern divine beauties, it is necessary to discern and believe the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; for they are one and the same thing.

But the previous change which Mr. E. acknowledges, it will be said, is by means of the word. Be it so; yet it cannot be by the word as spiritually discerned and believed, for spiritual discernment and belief are supposed to be the effect of it.

M. E. says, indeed, that "the hinge upon which the inquiry turns is, what is that principle, and how is it implanted?" But this is mere evasion; for let the principle be what it may, and let it be implanted how it may, since it is allowed to be necessary "before we can discern divine beauties," and of course before we can actively believe in Christ, the argument is given up.

The principle itself he makes to be "the word passively received; but as this is supposed to be previously to "the discernment of divine beauties," and to the soul's actively believing in Christ, it cannot of course have been produced by either: and to speak of the word becoming a spiritual principle in us before it is either understood or believed, is going a step beyond his opponents. I have no doubt that the word of God, when it is once understood and believed, becomes a living principle of evangelical obedience. This I conceive to be the meaning of our Lord, when he told the woman of Samaria that, "whosoever should drink of the water that he should give him (that is, of the gospel,) it should be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life." But, for the word to become a principle before it is actively received, or, to use the language of Peter, before we have "purified our souls by obeying it," is that of which I can form no idea, and I suppose neither did Mr. Ecking.

As to the second part of what he calls the hinge of the inquiry, viz: how this principle is implanted? he endeavors to illustrate it by a number of examples taken from the miracles of Christ, in which the word of Christ certainly did not operate on the mind in a way of motive presented to its consideration, but in a way similar to that of the Creator, when he said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Such is manifestly the idea conveyed by the words in John v. 25, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." To such an application of the word I have no objection. That for which I contend is that there is a change effected in the soul of a sinner, called in scripture "giving him eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand"—"a new heart, and a right spirit"—"a new creation," &c. &c.; that this change is antecedent to his actively believ-

ing in Christ for salvation; and that it is not effected by motives addressed to the mind in a way of moral suasion, but by the mighty power of God. Mr. McLean allows faith to be a *duty*, or an *act* of obedience. But, if so, this obedience must be yielded either in a spiritual or in a carnal state. If the former, it is all that on this subject is pleaded for. If the latter, that is the same thing as supposing that the carnal mind, *while such*, is enabled to act spiritually, and that it thereby becomes spiritual.

To this purpose I wrote in my *Appendix*, pp. 481, 482; and what has Mr. McLean said in his reply? Let him answer for himself. "This is a very unfair state of the question so far as it relates to the opinion of his opponents; for he represents them as maintaining that the Holy Spirit causes the mind *while carnal*, or before it is spiritually illuminated, to discern and believe spiritual things; and then he sets himself to argue against this contradiction of his own framing, as a thing impossible in its own nature, and as declared by the Holy Spirit to be so. 1. Cor. ii. 14. Were I to state Mr. F.'s sentiment thus, The Holy Spirit imparts to the mind *while carnal* a holy susceptibility and relish for the truth, would he not justly complain that I had misrepresented his view, and that he did not mean that the mind could possess any holy susceptibility while it was in a carnal state; but only that the Holy Spirit, by the very act of imparting this holy susceptibility and relish for the truth, removed the carnality of the mind? But then this explanation applies equally to the other side of the question; and surely it appears at least as consistent with the nature of things, and as easy to conceive that the Holy Spirit should in the first instance communicate the light of truth to a dark carnal mind, and thereby render it spiritual, as that he should prior to that impart to it a holy susceptibility and relish for the truth."—*Reply*, p. 7.

Now, my friend, I entreat your close attention, and that of the reader, to this part of the subject; for here is the hinge of the present question.

I am accused of framing a contradiction which my opponents do not hold. They do not hold, then, it seems, that the Holy Spirit causes the mind *while carnal* to discern and believe spiritual things. Spiritual illumination precedes believing; such an illumination, too, as removes carnality from the mind, renders the soul spiritual, and so enables it to discern and believe spiritual things. Where then is the difference between us? Surely it does not consist in my holding with a previous principle as necessary to believing; for they profess to hold what amounts to the same thing. If there be any difference, however, it must lie

in the *nature* of that which is communicated, or in the *order* in which it operates. And, as to the first, seeing it is allowed to remove carnality, and to render the soul spiritual, there can be no material difference on this head. With respect to the second, namely, the order of its operations, Mr. M. thinks that the communication of the light of truth to a dark, carnal mind, whereby it is rendered spiritual, furnishes an easy and consistent view of things. To which I answer, If the carnality of the mind were owing to its darkness, it would be so. But Mr. M. has himself told us a different tale, and that from unquestionable authority. "Our Lord," he says, "asks the Jews, 'Why do ye not understand my speech?' and gives this reason for it, 'even because ye cannot hear my word;' that is, cannot endure my doctrine."—*Works*, Vol. II, p. 110.

Now, if this be just (and who can controvert it?) it is not easy to conceive how light introduced into the mind should be capable of removing carnality. It is easy to conceive of the removal of an effect by the removal of the cause, but not of the removal of a cause by the removal of the effect.

But whatever difference may remain as to the order of operation, the idea of a previous principle is held by Mr. M. as much as by his opponent. Only call it "divine illumination, by which the dark and carnal mind is rendered spiritual," and he believes it.

In endeavoring to show the unfairness of the contradiction which I alleged against him, Mr. M. loses himself and his reader, by representing it as made to the act of the Holy Spirit in imparting spiritual light to the soul while carnal; whereas that which I alleged against him respected the act of the creature in discerning and believing spiritual things, while such. If God's communicating either light or holiness to a dark and carnal mind be a contradiction, it is of Mr. M.'s framing and not mine; but I see no contradiction, in it, so that it be in the natural order of things, any more than in his "quickening us when we were dead in trespasses and sins," which phraseology certainly does not denote that we are dead and alive at the same time! The contradiction alleged consisted in the carnal mind's being supposed to act spiritually, and not to its being acted upon by divine influence, let that influence be what it might. It would be no contradiction to say of Tabitha, that life was imparted to her *while dead*: but it would be contradiction to affirm that while she was dead God caused her to open her eyes, and to look upon Peter!

Mr. McLean has, I allow, cleared himself of this contradiction, by admitting the sinner to be made spiritual through divine il-



lumination, previously to his believing in Christ; but then it is at the expense of the grand article in dispute, which he has thereby given up; maintaining, as much as his opponent, the idea of a previous principle, or of the soul's being rendered spiritual antecedently to its believing in Christ.

The principal ground on which Mr. McLean, Mr. Ecking, and all the writers on that side the question, rest their cause, is the use of such language as the following: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." "I have begotten you through the gospel."

On this phraseology I shall submit to you and the reader two or three observations:

First: A being begotten, or born again, by the word, does not necessarily signify a being regenerated by faith in the word. Faith itself is ascribed to the word as well as regeneration; for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" but, if we say faith cometh by the word *believed*, that is the same as saying that it cometh by itself. Mr. M. has no idea of the word having any influence but as it is believed (Reply, pp. 17—34:) yet he tells us (p. 113) that faith is "the effect of the regenerating influence of the Spirit and word of God." But if faith be the effect of the word believed, it must be the effect of itself. The truth is, the word may operate as an inducement to believe, as well as a stimulus to a new life when it is believed.

Secondly: The terms *regeneration*, *begotten*, *born again*, &c., are not always used in the same extent of meaning. They sometimes denote the whole of that change which denominates us Christians, and which of course includes repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ: and in this sense the foregoing passages are easily understood. But the question is whether regeneration, or those terms by which it is expressed in the scriptures, such as being begotten, born again, quickened, &c., be not sometimes used in a stricter sense. Mr. M., confining what I had said on the subject of regeneration, as expressed by being begotten, born again, &c., to the term itself, is "confident it bears no such meaning in the sacred writings."—p. 17. But if a being born again, which is expressive of regeneration, be sometimes used to account for faith, as a cause accounts for its effect, that is all which the argument requires to be established. If it be necessary to be born again in order to believing, we cannot in this sense, unless the effect could be the means of producing the cause, be born again by believing. Whether this be the case, let the following passages determine.

John i. 11—13. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not, but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." I can conceive of no reason why the new birth is here introduced, but to account for some receiving Christ, or believing on his name while others received him not. Calvin appears to have ordinarily considered regeneration in the large sense as stated above, and therefore speaks of it as an effect of faith. Yet, when commenting on this passage, perceiving that it is here introduced to account for faith, he writes thus: "Hereupon it followeth, first, that faith proceedeth not from us, but that it is a fruit of spiritual regeneration, for the evangelist saith (in effect) that no man can believe unless he be begotten of God; therefore faith is an heavenly gift. Secondly: That faith is not a cold and bare knowledge: seeing none can believe but he that is fashioned again by the Spirit of God. Notwithstanding it seemeth that the evangelist dealeth disorderly in putting regeneration before faith, seeing that it is rather an effect of faith, and therefore to be set after it." To this objection he answers that "both may very well agree," and goes on to expound the subject of regeneration as sometimes denoting the producing of faith itself, and sometimes of a new life *by* faith.

John iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." On this passage Doctor Campbell, in his notes, is very particular, proving that by the kingdom or reign of God is meant that of Messiah in this world; and that *ou duvarai* (*cannot*) denotes the incapacity of the unregenerate to discern or believe the gospel. The import of this passage is, in his apprehension, this: "The man who is not regenerated, or born again of water and Spirit is not in a capacity of perceiving the reign of God, though it were commenced. Though the kingdom of the saints on the earth were already established, the unregenerate would not discern it, because it is a spiritual, not a worldly kingdom, and capable of being no otherwise than spiritually discerned. And, as the kingdom, itself would remain unknown to him, he could not share in the blessings enjoyed by the subjects of it. The same sentiment occurs in 1 Cor. ii. 14."

1 Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Mr. M., in his discourses on the parable of the sower, says, "It is a doctrine clearly taught in the scriptures that none have a true understanding of the gos-

pel but such as are taught of God by the special illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit. We are expressly told that, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'" And in answering an objector, who asks, "What particular truth or sentiment is communicated to the mind by the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, and which unenlightened men can have no idea of?"—Mr. M. says, "It is not pleaded that any truth or sentiment is communicated to the mind by the Spirit besides what is already clearly revealed in the word; and the illumination of the Spirit is to make men perceive and understand that revelation which is already given in its true light."—*Sermons*, pp. 78, 80, 81.

Mr. M.'s object, through this whole paragraph, seems to be to prove that the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit is necessary in order to our understanding the scriptures; but, if so, it cannot be by the scriptures as understood that we are thus illuminated, for this were a contradiction. It cannot be by any particular truth or sentiment revealed, any more than unrevealed, that we possess, "eyes to see, ears to hear, or a heart to understand" it. If the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit consisted in imparting any particular truth or sentiment to the mind, even that which is revealed in the scriptures, where would be the mystery of the operation? Instead of being compared to the operations of the wind, of which we know nothing but by its effects,\* it might have been ranked among the operations of motives as suggested by man to man, or, at least, as put into the mind by the providence of God so ordering it that such thoughts should strike and influence the mind at the time.—*Ezra* vii. 27. But this would not answer to the scriptural accounts of our being quickened, who were dead in sins, by the power of God; even by the "exceeding greatness of his power, according to that which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead."

Mr. M. has taken great pains to show the absurdity of my reasoning on this subject; yet the sum of it is this, That which is necessary in order to understanding and believing the word cannot be by means of understanding and believing it.

All true knowledge of divine things is no doubt to be ascribed to the word as the objective cause, in the same way as corporeal perception is ascribed to light. We cannot see without light; neither can we understand or believe spiritual things but by the

word of God. But the question does not relate to what is objective but subjective; or, if I might speak in reference to what is corporeal, not to light, but discernment. Mr. Ecking speaks of light shining into a dark room, and of the absurdity of supposing there must be some principles of light in this room which disposed it to receive that which shone into it.—p. 68. But, if by the light he mean the gospel, he should rather have compared it to light shining upon a blind man, and have shown the absurdity, if he could, of supposing it necessary for his eyes to be opened ere he could discern or enjoy it. There is nothing in a dark room to resist the light, but that is not the case with the dark soul of a sinner. "The light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth (or, as Campbell renders it *admitteth*) it not."

Though I cannot think, with Mr. E., that the word of God becomes a spiritual principle in us till it is actively received, yet I allow that it is productive of great effects. The understanding and conscience being enlightened by it many open sins are forsaken, and many things done in a way of what is called religious duty. And though I have no notion of directing sinners to a course of previous humiliation, nor opinion of the efforts of man toward preparing himself for the reception of divine grace; yet I believe God ordinarily so deals with men as gradually to beat down their false confidences, and reduce them to extremity, ere they are brought to embrace the gospel. Such things are not necessarily connected with faith or salvation. In many instances they have their issue in mere self-righteous hope; and, where it is otherwise, they are to faith and salvation, as I have said before, but as the *noise* and the *shaking* of the dry bones to the *breath of life*.

Moreover, the word of God produces still greater and better effects *when it is believed*. In them that believe "it worketh effectually." When the commandment comes to a soul in its spirituality, it gives him to perceive the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and when the gospel comes, not in word only, but in power, it produces mighty effects. It is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It operated before to the "pulling down of strong holds," and the casting down of many a vain "imagination;" but now it "bringeth every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ." It is thus that we "know the truth, and the truth (as known) makes us free." If once we are enabled to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, it changes us into the same image, begets and excites holy affections, and produces every kind of gracious exercise.

The gospel is the mould into which the

\* Such is the meaning of John iii. 8, according to Campbell, and all other expositors that I have seen.



mind of the believer is cast, and by which it is formed. The statement of Dr. Owen, as quoted by Mr. Ecking, is very just and scriptural. "As the word is in the gospel, so is grace in the heart; yea, they are the same things variously expressed. Rom. vi. 17. As our translation doth not, so I know not how in so few words to express that which is so emphatically here insinuated by the Holy Spirit. The meaning is, that the doctrine of the gospel begets the *form, figure, image, or likeness* of itself in the hearts of them that believe; so they are cast into the *mould* of it. As is the one, so is the other. The principle of grace in the heart, and that in the word, are as children of the same parent, completely resembling and representing one another. Grace is a living word, and the word is figured, limned grace. As we have heard, so have we seen and found it; such a soul can produce the duplicate of the word, and so adjust all things thereby," &c.\*

All this describes the effect of the word on those *who believe it*; but the question is, how we come to believe it? Dr. Owen has elsewhere attempted to solve this difficulty by proving that a principle of spiritual life is communicated to the sinner in regeneration antecedently to believing.† He doubtless considered these things as consistent with each other; and, though Mr. Ecking in making the quotation appears to consider them as contradictory, yet, while he admits that "we must have a spiritual principle before we can discern divine beauties," the same contradiction, if such it be, attaches to himself.

I allow, with Dr. Owen, that the Spirit of God makes use of "the reasons, motives, and persuasive arguments which the word affords, to affect the mind; and that converted persons are able to give some account of the considerations whereby they were prevailed upon." But I also think, with him that "the *whole* work of the Spirit in our conversion does not consist herein; but that there is a real physical work whereby he imparts spiritual life to the souls of all who are truly regenerated."‡

Mr. McLean rejects the idea of *physical influence*, and seems to confound it with something corporeal or mechanical. *Works*, p. 84. If I understand the term *physical*, with respect to influence, it is opposed to moral. That influence is denominated moral that works upon the mind by motives or considerations which induce it to this or that, and all beyond this is physical and supernatural. When God created the soul of man originally in righteousness and

true holiness, I suppose it must be allowed to have been a physical work. Man certainly was not induced by motives to be righteous any more than to be rational; yet there was nothing corporeal or mechanical in it. It is thus that I understand Dr. Owen in the passage just quoted, in which, while he admits of the use of moral suasion, he denies that the *whole* work of conversion consists in it; and I should think Mr. M. could not even upon his own principles maintain the contrary. For, whatever motives or considerations the word of God may furnish in a way of moral suasion, yet he holds with the necessity of a divine supernatural influence being superadded to it, by which the mind is illuminated and rendered spiritual. But, if divine influence consist in any thing distinct from the influence of the word, it must be supernatural and physical. The party is also equally unconscious of it on his principles as on mine: he is conscious of nothing but its effects. He finds himself the subject of new views and sensations; but, as to knowing whence they came, it is likely he thinks nothing of it at the time, and is ready to imagine that any person, if he would but look into the Bible, must see what he sees so plainly taught in it. He may be conscious of ideas suggested to him by the word, and of their effect upon his mind; but, as to any divine influence accompanying them, he knows nothing of it.

Mr. Ecking represents "the inability or spiritual death of sinners as *consisting in disinclination*, or loving darkness rather than light." And this disinclination he ascribes to *ignorance and unbelief*; whence he argues, "If the removal of the effect is by removing the cause, it is reasonable to suppose that this is the way in which God works upon the human mind,"—p. 66. That the removal of the effect is by the removal of the cause I allow; but what authority had Mr. E. for making ignorance and unbelief the cause of spiritual death? Spiritual death *consists in* ignorance and unbelief, no less than in disinclination. It consist in *sin* (Ephes. ii. 1;) and, if ignorance and unbelief are sins, they are of the essence of spiritual death. It is true they are productive of other sins, and may be considered as growing near to the root of moral evil: but unless a thing can be the cause of itself, they are not the cause of *all* evil. Before we ascribe spiritual death to ignorance, it is necessary to enquire whether this ignorance be voluntary or involuntary? If *involuntary*, it is in itself sinless; and to represent this as the cause of depravity is to join with Godwin in explaining away the innate principles of evil and indeed all moral evil and accountableness, from among men. If *vol-*

\* On Psalm 130, pp. 168—170; in Ecking's Essays, pp. 77, 79.

† Discourses on the Holy Spirit, Book III. C. I.

‡ Discourses on the Holy Spirit, Book III. C. 5. Sec. 18.

untary, the solution does not reach the bottom of the subject; for the question still returns, what is the cause of the voluntariness of ignorance, or of the sinner's loving darkness rather than light? Is this also to be ascribed to ignorance? If so, the same consequence follows as before, that there is no such thing as moral evil or accountableness among men.

Mr. McLean has stated this subject much clearer than Mr. Ecking. He may elsewhere have written in a different strain, but, in the last edition of his *Dissertation on the Influences of the Holy Spirit*, he attributes ignorance and unbelief to hatred, and not hatred to ignorance and unbelief. "Our Lord," he says, "asks the Jews, *Why do ye not understand my speech?* And gives this reason for it, *even because ye cannot hear my word*—that is, cannot endure my doctrine. Their love of worldly honor and the applause of men is given as a reason why they could not believe in him. John v. 44. He traces their unbelief into their HATRED both of him and his Father. John xv. 22, 24."—*Works*, Vol. II. p. 110.

Nothing is more evident than that the cause of spiritual blindness is, in the scriptures, ascribed to disposition. "Light is come into the world; but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." "They say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." "Being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness (hardness, or callousness) of the heart." "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word." But if, as the scriptures teach, the cause of both ignorance and unbelief is to be traced to *hatred* (as Mr. McLean acknowledges;) and if, as Mr. Ecking says, "effects are removed by the removal of the cause," I scarcely need to draw the consequence that though in a general sense it be true that we are regenerated by believing the gospel, yet in a more particular sense it is equally true that we are regenerated *in order to it*.

It is somewhat extraordinary that Mr. McLean, after allowing pride and aversion to be the great obstructions to faith, should yet deny the removal of them to be necessary to it. He will allow some sort of conviction of sin to be necessary to believing in Christ; but nothing that includes the removal of enmity or pride, for this were equal to allowing repentance to be necessary to it; but, if enmity and pride be not removed, how can the sinner, according to our Lord's reasoning in John viii. 43, v. 44, understand or believe the gospel? If there be any meaning in words, it is supposed by this language that, in order to understand and believe the gospel, it is necessary to

"endure" the doctrine, and to feel a regard to "the honor that cometh from God." To account for the removal of pride and enmity as *bars to believing, by means of believing*, is, I say, very extraordinary, and as consistent with Mr. M.'s own concessions as it is with scripture and reason; for, when writing on spiritual illumination, he allows the dark and carnal mind to be thereby rendered spiritual, and so enabled to discern and believe spiritual things.—*Reply*, p. 7.

#### LETTER VIII.

*An Inquiry whether the Principles here defended affect the Doctrine of Free Justification by faith in the Righteousness of Christ.*

You are aware that this subject has frequently occurred in the foregoing letters: but, being of the first importance, I wish to appropriate one letter wholly to it. If any thing I have advanced be inconsistent with justification by faith alone, in opposition to justification by the works of the law, I am not aware of it; and, on conviction that it is so, should feel it my duty to retract it. I know Mr. McLean has labored hard to substantiate this charge against me; but I know also that it belongs to the adherents of the system to claim the exclusive possession of this doctrine, and to charge others with error concerning it on very insufficient grounds.\* You may remember, perhaps, that Dr. Gill was accused of self-righteousness by Mr. Sandeman, on the ground of his being an anti-Pædobaptist!

A large part of that which Mr. McLean has written on this subject is what I never meant to oppose; much of what he imputes to me is without foundation; and even where my sentiments are introduced they are generally in caricature.

I have no doubt of the character which a sinner sustains antecedently to his justification, both in the account of the Lawgiver of the world and in his own account, being that of ungodly. I have no objection to Mr. M.'s own statement, that God may as properly be said to justify the ungodly as to pardon the guilty. If the sin-

\* I do not mean to suggest that Mr. McLean's system is precisely that of Mr. Sandeman. The former, in his *Thoughts on the Calls of the Gospel*, has certainly departed from it in many things, particularly in respect of the sinner's being justified antecedently to any "act, exercise or advance," of his mind towards Christ; and on which account Mr. S. would have set him down among the *popular preachers*. But he has so much of the system of Mr. S. still in his mind as often to reason upon the ground of it, and to involve himself in numerous inconsistencies.

\* See Letters on Theron and Aspasio, Vol. II. p. 481, Note.



ner at the instant of justification be allowed not to be at enmity with God, that is all I contend for, and that is in effect allowed by Mr. M. He acknowledges that the apostle "does not use the word ungodly to describe the existing character of an actual believer."—p. 123. But if so, as no man is justified till he is an actual believer, no man is justified in enmity to God. He also considers faith, justification, and sanctification, as coeval, and allows that no believer is in a state of enmity to God.—p. 43. It follows that, as no man is justified till he believes in Jesus, no man is justified till he ceases to be God's enemy. If this be granted, all is granted for which I contend.

If there be any meaning in words, Mr. Sandeman considered the term ungodly as denoting the existing state of the mind in a believer at the time of his justification; for he professes to have been at enmity with God, or, which is the same thing, not to have "begun to love him," till he was justified, and even perceived that he was so.\* It was this notion that I wished to oppose, and not any thing relative to the character under which the sinner is justified. Mr. M.'s third question, namely, "whether justifying faith respects God as the justifier of the ungodly," was never any question with me. Yet he will have it that I "make the apostle by the term ungodly to mean godly." He might as well say that when I allow pardon to respect men as guilty, and yet plead for repentance as necessary to it, I make repentance and guilt to be the same thing.

I am not aware of any difference with Mr. M. as to what constitutes a godly character. Though faith is necessary to justification, and therefore in the order of nature previous to it, yet I have no objection to what he says, that it does not constitute a godly character, or state, previously to justification.—p. 145. And whatever I have written of repentance as preceding faith in Christ, or of a holy faith as necessary to justification, I do not consider any person as a penitent or holy character till he believes in Christ and is justified. The holiness for which I plead antecedent to this is merely incipient; the rising beam of the sanctification of the Spirit. It is no more than the spirituality which Mr. M. considers as produced by divine illumination previously or in order to believing (p. 7;) and all the consequences that he has charged on the one might with equal justice be charged on the other.

Nor am I aware of any difference in our views respecting the *duties of unbelievers*; if there be any, however, it is not on the side that Mr. M. imagines, but the contra-

ry. Having described the awakened sinner as "convinced of guilt, distressed in his mind on account of it, really concerned about the salvation of his soul, and not only earnestly desiring relief, but diligently laboring to obtain it, according to the directions given him by the exercise of holy affections and dispositions," he adds, "all this I admit may be previous to faith in Christ and forgiveness through him. And will Mr. Fuller deny this is the repentance he pleads for in order to forgiveness?"—p. 148. Most certainly he will. Had this been what he pleaded for, he had been justly chargeable with the consequences which Mr. McLean has attempted to load him with. But it is not. I cannot but consider this question as a proof that Mr. M. utterly mistook my sentiments on this part of the subject, as much as I did his in another, in consequence of having considered him as the author of a piece called *Simple Truth*. I have no more idea of there being any holiness in the exercises which he has described than he himself has. I might add, *nor quite so much*; for, notwithstanding what he has here advanced in his *Thoughts on the Calls of the Gospel*, he does not keep clear of unregenerate works being somewhat good, or at least that they are not *all* and *altogether* sinful.\* If this be compared with what I have written on *total depravity* in my *Dialogues and Letters*, it will be seen who holds and who holds not with the holiness of the doings of the unregenerate.

But, whether or not I deny this to be the repentance for which I plead as necessary to forgiveness, Mr. M. plainly intimates that *it is all the repentance which he allows to be so*. In all that he has written therefore, acknowledging repentance to be necessary to forgiveness, he only means to allow that a few graceless convictions are so; and, in contradiction to the whole current of scripture, even to those scriptures which he has produced and reasoned from in his *Thoughts on the Calls of the Gospel*, still believes that sinners are forgiven prior to any repentance but that which needs to be repented of.—*Reply*, pp. 36—42.

The difference between us, as to the subject of this letter, seems chiefly to respect the nature of faith, whether it include any exercise of the will; and, if it do, whether it affect the doctrine of free justification.

Mr. M. acknowledges faith, as a principle of sanctification, to be holy: it is only *as justifying* that he is for excluding all holy affection from it.—p. 97. But, if it be holy in relation to sanctification, it must be *holy in itself*; and that which is holy in itself must be so in every relation which it

\* Epistolary Correspondence, p. 12.

\* See Vol. II, of his works, pp. 63, 64.

sustains. It is not one kind of faith that sanctifies, and another that justifies; but the same thing in different respects. To represent faith sanctifying as being holy, and faith justifying as having no holiness in it, is not viewing the same, but a different thing in different respects.

For a specimen of Mr. M.'s manner of writing on this subject, you will excuse my copying as follows: "An awakened sinner asks, 'What must I do to be saved?' An apostle answers, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' But a preacher of the doctrine I am opposing would have taught him another lesson. He might, indeed, in compliance with scripture language, use the word *believe*; but he would tell him that, in this case, it did not bear its usual sense, that it was not the assent of his understanding, in giving credit to the testimony of the gospel, but a *grace* arising from a *previous* spiritual principle, and including in it a number of *holy affections* and *dispositions* of heart, all which he must exercise and set a working, in order to his being justified; and many directions will be given him how he is to perform this. But this is to destroy the freedom of the gospel, and to make the hope of a sinner turn upon his finding some virtuous exercises and dispositions in his own heart, instead of placing it directly in the work finished by the Son of God upon the cross. In opposition to this, I maintain that whatever virtue or holiness may be supposed in the nature of faith itself, as it is not the ground of a sinner's justification in the sight of God, so neither does it enter into the consideration of the person who is really believing unto righteousness. He views himself, not as exercising virtue, but only as a mere sinner, while he believes on him that justifieth the ungodly, through the atonement."—pp. 98, 99.

You will not expect me to answer this. It is a proof how far a writer may misunderstand and so misrepresent his opponent; and, even in those things wherein he understands him, describe him in caricature. I will only apply a few of the leading traits in this picture to Mr. M.'s own principles. "A preacher of this doctrine, instead of directing a sinner to believe in Christ, and there leaving it, would tell him that faith was an assent of his *understanding*, a *grace* arising from a *previous divine illumination*, by which he becomes spiritual, and which he must therefore first be possessed of, and thus set him a working in order to get it, that he may be justified. But this is to deny the freeness of the gospel, and to make the hope of a sinner turn upon his finding some *light within* him, instead of placing it upon the finished work of the Son of God upon the cross. In opposition to this,

I maintain that whatever illumination may be supposed necessary to believing, and whatever spiritual perception is contained in the nature of it, as it is not the ground of a sinner's justification in the sight of God, so neither does it enter into the consideration of the person who is really believing unto righteousness. He views himself not as divinely illuminated, but merely as a sinner, believing in him who justifieth the ungodly through the righteousness of his Son."

Mr. M., when writing in this strain, knew that I had said nearly the same things; and therefore that, if he were opposing me, I had first opposed myself. He even quotes almost a page of my acknowledgments on the subject.—p. 100. But these are things, it seems, which I only "sometimes seem to hold." Well, if Mr. M. can prove that I have *any where*, either in the piece he was answering, or in any other, directed the sinner's attention to the workings of his own mind, instead of Christ, or have set him a *working* (unless he please to give that name to an exhortation to forsake his way, and return to God, through Jesus Christ,) or have given him any *directions* how to work himself into a believing frame; then let all that he has said stand against me. But, if not, let me be believed when I declare my utter disapprobation of every thing of the kind.

But Mr. M. has another charge, or rather *suspicion*, against me. "Mr. Fuller admits," he says, "that faith does not justify, either as an *internal* or *external work*, or *holy exercise*, or as being *any part* of that which is imputed unto us for righteousness; and, did not other parts of his writings appear to clash with this, I should rest satisfied. But I own that I am not without a suspicion that Mr. F. here only means that faith does not justify as the *procuring cause* or *meritorious ground* of a sinner's justification; and that, while we hold this point, we may include as much virtue and holy exercise of the will and affections as we please, without affecting the point of justification, as that stands entirely upon another ground, viz. the righteousness of Christ. But it must be carefully observed that the difference between us *does not respect the meritorious procuring cause* of justification, but the *way* in which we receive it.—p. 100.

Be it according to this statement (and I have no objection to say that such is the whole of my meaning,) yet what is there in this that clashes with the above acknowledgments, or with free justification? There may be a "difference between us" which yet may not affect this doctrine. But let us hear him through.

"The scriptures abundantly testify that we are *justified by faith*, which shows that



faith has some concern in this matter." True. "And Mr. Fuller admits that justification is ascribed to faith, merely as that which *unites to Christ*, for the sake of whose righteousness alone we are accepted." Very good. "Therefore, the only question between us is this: Does faith unite us to Christ, and so receive justification through his righteousness, *merely in crediting* the divine testimony respecting the sufficiency of that righteousness alone to justify us; or does it unite us to Christ, and obtain justification through his righteousness, by virtue of its being a *moral excellency*, and as including the *holy exercises* of the will and affections? The former is my view of this matter: the latter, if I am not greatly mistaken, is Mr. Fuller's."—p. 101.

It is some satisfaction to find our differences on the important doctrine of justification reduced to a single point. Allowing my sentiments to be fairly stated (and, though I should not express them just in these words, yet I certainly do consider a holy faith as necessary to unite us to a holy Saviour,) the question is, whether this sentiment clashes with the foregoing acknowledgments, or with the doctrine of free justification? It lies on Mr. M. to *prove* that it does so. Let us hear him. "I hold that sinners are justified through Christ's righteousness, *by faith alone*, or purely in believing that the righteousness of Christ which he finished on the cross, and which was declared to be accepted by his resurrection from the dead, is alone sufficient for their pardon and acceptance with God, however guilty and unworthy they are. But, in opposition to this, the whole strain of Mr. Fuller's reasoning tends to show that sinners are not justified by faith *alone*, but by faith working by love, or including in it the holy exercise of the will and affections; and this addition to faith he makes to be that qualification in it on which the fitness or congruity of an interest in Christ's righteousness depends.—App. pp. 105, 106. Without this addition he considers faith itself, whatever be its grounds or objects, to be an empty, unholy speculation, which requires no influence of the Spirit to produce it.—p. 128. So that, if what is properly termed *faith* has in his opinion any place at all in justification, it must be merely on account of the holy exercises and affections which attend it."—pp. 101, 102.

Such is Mr. M.'s *proof* of my inconsistency with my own acknowledgments, and with the freeness of justification.

Let it be remembered, in the first place, that the difference between us, by Mr. M.'s own acknowledgment, does not respect the *meritorious* or *procuring cause* of justification. All he says, therefore, of "the righteousness of Christ as finished, and declar-

ed to be accepted by his resurrection from the dead, being alone sufficient for our pardon and acceptance with God, however guilty and unworthy we are," belongs equally to my views as to his own: yet, immediately after these words, he says, "but in *opposition* to this Mr. F.," &c., as if these sentiments were exclusively his own. The difference between us belongs to the nature of justifying faith. He considers the sinner as united to Christ, and so as justified, by the mere assent of his understanding to the doctrine of the cross *exclusive of all approbation of it*: whereas I consider every thing pertaining to the understanding, when the term is used exclusive of approbation, to be either merely natural, or a "seeing and hating of Christ and the Father." Nor is approbation a mere effect of faith, but enters into its essence. It is believing, but it is believing *with the heart*; which all the labors of Mr. Sandeman and his disciples have not been able to prove means only the understanding. We may believe many things without approving them: but the nature of the objects believed in this case renders cordiality essential to it. It is impossible, in the nature of things, to believe the gospel without a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the suitableness and glory of the Saviour, which does not merely *produce*, but *includes* approbation of him. To "see no form nor comeliness in him" is the same thing as to be an unbeliever; and the contrary is to be a believer.

But I shall notice these remarks of Mr. M., a little more particularly.

First: by the manner in which he has introduced them, it must appear to the reader that I had not fully declared my mind on this subject, and that Mr. M., in detecting my errors, was obliged to proceed on the uncertain ground of "suspicion:" yet he could not have read the very pages on which he was inadvertently, without having repeatedly met with the most express avowals of the sentiment, such as the following: "Whatever is pleaded in behalf of the holy nature of faith, it is not supposed to justify us as a *work*, or *holy exercise*, or as being *any part of that which is accounted unto us for righteousness*; but merely as that which *unites to Christ*, for the sake of whose righteousness alone we are accepted." Again: "Living faith, or faith that worketh by love, is necessary to justification, not as being the ground of our acceptance with God, not as a virtue of which justification is the reward, but as that without which we could not be united to a living Redeemer." Yet, with these passages before his eyes, Mr. M. affects to be at a loss to know my sentiments; he "suspects" I maintain holy affection in faith as necessary to union with Christ!

Secondly: If the difference between us has no respect to the meritorious or procuring cause of justification, as Mr. M. allows it has not, then why does he elsewhere tell his reader that "he thinks Mr. F. means to plead for such a moral fitness for justification as that wherein the virtue of the party commends him to it; or in which he is put into a good state as a fit or suitable testimony of regard to the moral excellency of his qualifications or acts."—p. 104. I know not what Mr. M. may think, but I should consider this as making faith the procuring cause, or meritorious ground, of justification: for what is the meritorious ground of a blessing but that in consideration of which it is bestowed?

Thirdly: If it is not sufficient that we ascribe the meritorious or procuring cause of justification to the work of Christ, unless we also exclude all holy affection from the nature of faith as uniting us to him, how is it that Mr. M. has written as he has on the *Calls of the Gospel*? He seems to have thought it quite enough for him to disavow repentance or faith as making any part of our justifying righteousness, though the same disavowal on my part gives him no satisfaction. "Did Peter," he asks, "overturn the doctrine of free justification by faith when he exhorted the unbelieving Jews to repent and be converted that their sins might be blotted out? Does he there direct them to any part of that work which Christ had finished for the justification of the ungodly, or lead them to think that their faith, repentance, and conversion, were to make an atonement for their sins?" Again: "Cannot the wicked be exhorted to believe, repent, and seek the Lord, and be encouraged to this by a promise of success, without making the success to depend on human merit? Are such exhortations and promises always to be suspected of having a dangerous and self-righteous tendency? Instead of taking them in their plain and simple sense, must our main care always be to guard against some supposed self-righteous use of them, till we have explained away their whole force and spirit, and so distinguished and refined upon them as to make men more afraid to comply with than to reject them, lest they should be guilty of some exertion of mind or body, some good disposition or motion toward Christ, which is supposed to be the highest wickedness, and a despising of the work of Christ?"\*

If there be any meaning in words, Mr. M. here most decidedly contends for repentance, faith, and conversion (which must be allowed to include holy affection,) being necessary, in the established order of things

to mercy, pardon, &c., which must also be allowed to include justification.

Fourthly: With respect to fitness, I think, with Mr. M., that there is a "peculiar suitability in faith to receive justification, and every other spiritual blessing, purely of grace."—p. 106. It is "of faith that it might be of grace." And this peculiar suitability consists in its being of the nature of faith to receive the blessings of grace as God's free gifts through the atonement, instead of performing any thing in the way of being rewarded for it. Thus it is properly opposed to the works of the law. But it does not follow that in order to this there must be no "good disposition or motion toward Christ" in our believing in him. On the contrary, if faith were mere knowledge, exclusive of approbation, it would not be adapted to receive the doctrine of the gospel; it would be either unholy, or at best merely natural. If the former, instead of receiving, it would be certain to reject the heavenly doctrine; and, if the latter, there would be no more suitability to receive it than there is in the wisdom of this world to receive the true knowledge of God. A holy faith is necessary to receive a holy doctrine, and so to unite us to a holy Saviour.

The fitness for which I plead, in God's justifying those who cordially acquiesce in the gospel-way of salvation, rather than others, and which Mr. M. considers as inconsistent with free justification (Reply, p. 103,) is no other than that fitness of wisdom, which, while it preserves the honors of grace, is not inattentive to those of righteousness. Had it been said, Though the wicked forsake not his way, nor the unrighteous man his thoughts, and though he return not to the Lord, yet will he have mercy upon him, nor to our God, yet will he abundantly pardon, we should feel a want of fitness, and instantly perceive that grace was here exalted at the expense of righteousness. He that can discern no fitness in such connections but that of works and rewards must have yet to learn some of the first principles of the oracles of God.

Fifthly: With respect to justification by faith alone, Mr. M. appears to have affixed a new sense to the phrase. I have always understood it to mean justification by a righteousness received, in opposition to justification by a righteousness performed, according to Gal. iii. 11, 12,—“That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident: for the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but the man that doeth them shall live in them.” In this sense, justification by faith alone applies to my views of the subject as well as to his: but the sense in which he uses the phrase is very nearly akin to that in which James uses it when speaking of faith as *dead, being alone*.

\* See Works, Vol. II., pp. 33, 55, 56.



We are, indeed justified by *faith alone*; but not by a faith *which is alone*.

Mr. M. is in the habit of speaking of that holiness which I conceive essential to the nature of faith as something "added" to it or as being something "more" than faith: but he might as well say that a cordial rejection of the gospel is something "more" than unbelief. In like manner he seems to consider the phrase, "faith which worketh by love" as expressive of what faith *produces posterior to its uniting us to Christ*; whereas it is of the nature of faith in its very *first* existence in the mind to work, and that in a way of love to the object. It is also remarkable that Paul speaks of faith which "worketh by love" as availing to justification; while circumcision or uncircumcision availeth nothing. Galatians v. 6. Faith, hope, and charity, have, no doubt their distinctive characters; but not one of them, nor any other grace, consists in its being devoid of holy affection. This is a common property belonging to all the graces, is co-aval with them, and essential to them. Whatever we may possess, call it knowledge or faith, or what we may if it be devoid of this, it is not the effect of special divine influence, and therefore not a fruit of the Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Lastly: If union with Christ were antecedent to all holy affection, it would not be what the scriptures represent it; viz: a union of spirit: "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Union of spirit must include congeniality of disposition. Our heart must be as Christ's heart, or we are not one with him. Believing in him with all the heart, we hence, according to the wise and gracious constitution of the gospel, and not in reward of any holiness in us, possess a revealed interest in him, and in all the benefits arising from his obedience unto death. "He that hath the Son hath life." Such appears to be the order of things as taught us in the scriptures, and such the connection between faith and justification. If union with Christ were acquired by faith and an interest in him were bestowed in reward of it, it would indeed be inconsistent with free justification; but if the necessity of a holy faith arise merely from the nature of things, that is, its fitness to unite us to a holy Saviour, and if faith itself be the gift of God, no such consequence follows: for the union, though we be active in it, is in reality formed by him who actuates us, and to him belongs the praise. "*Of him* are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Mr. M. has written much about God's

justifying the *ungodly*; but while he allows that the term is not descriptive of the existing character of a believer, I have no dispute with him. He admits that, when Christ is said to die for the ungodly, the term includes many who at the time were saints, only he died not for them as saints (p. 115;) and this I readily allow. The examples of Abraham and David were not introduced by me to prove them to have been godly characters for many years prior to their justification; but to show, from the examples of their faith not being taken from their first believing while yet it respected God as the justifier of the ungodly, that the doctrine of free justification could not require that the party should at the time be at enmity with God.\*

Mr. M. has also written much about the state of an awakened sinner. As he had disowned his being the subject of any holy affection, I concluded he must be "a hard-hearted enemy of God." This was stated, not from a want of feeling toward any poor sinner, but to show whither the principle led. Mr. M. answers; "I have not the least idea that a hard-hearted enemy of God, while such, can either receive or enjoy forgiveness; but I distinguish between such a state of mind and that of an awakened self-condemned sinner, and also between the latter and a real convert, who believes the gospel, has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and is possessed of holy affections."—p. 151. Is there a medium, then, between holy affection and hard-hearted enmity? If so, it must be something like neutrality. But Christ has left no room for this, having declared, "He that is not with me is against me." Let a sinner be alarmed as much as he may, if he have no holy affection toward God, he must be a hard-hearted enemy to him. Such I believe are many awakened sinners notwithstanding all their terrors, and such they will view themselves to have been, if ever they come to see things as they are. There are others, however, who, are not so, but whose convictions are spiritual, like those of Paul, who saw sin, "through the commandment, to be exceeding sinful," and who "through the law, became dead to the law, that he might live unto God." Convictions of this kind lead the sinner to Christ. They may not be distinguishable at the time, either by himself or others, and nothing but the effects may prove the difference; yet an essential difference there is.

Mr. M. refers to the case of the jailor. I know not what was his conviction of the evil of sin, nor when he became the subject of holy affection. But, be it when it might, he was till then a hard-hearted enemy of God. The case to which writers on Mr.

\* On this subject I beg leave to refer to Discourse XXII. of my work on Genesis.

M.'s side the question more frequently refer is that of the self-condemned publican; but, antecedently to his going down to his house justified, he "humbled himself," and that in a way of holy though not of joyful affection.

According to Mr. M. there is a state of mind which is not the effect of renewing grace, and therefore contains nothing truly good, but which is, nevertheless, necessary and sufficient to prepare the sinner for receiving the forgiveness of his sin. "A hard hearted enemy of God cannot receive or enjoy gospel forgiveness; but a sinner under terrors of conscience, though equally destitute of all regard for God as the other, can."

Far be it from me to impeach Mr. M.'s integrity. I doubt not but he thinks that in writing his *Reply* he was engaged in refuting error. Yet, if his own words are to be believed, he does not know after all but that he has been opposing the truth. In page 151 he says, "Whether such convictions as issue in conversion differ in kind from others *I will not take upon me to determine.*" That is, he does not know but that it may be so, and that there is such a thing as spiritual conviction of the evil of sin, antecedently to believing in the Saviour and subservient to it. But this is the same, in effect, as saying he does not know whether that which he has been opposing throughout his performance may not, after all, be true! "But I am certain of this," he adds, "that it would be very unsafe to build up any in an opinion of their possessing holiness merely upon the ground of their convictions, while they come short of a real change and do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That conviction of sin and its desert which is subservient to faith in Christ will never lead a person to think that it is any part of his holiness; for such a thought would be as opposite to the nature of his conviction as his feeling a disease would be to his thinking himself whole." Very good: but against what is it directed? not any thing advanced by his opponent. It is, however, manifestly against the scope of his own performance. The tendency, though not the design, of these remarks is to show that there is a "difference in kind" between some convictions and others, and a marked one too. "That conviction of sin and its desert which is subservient to faith in Christ will never lead a person to think that it is any part of his holiness;" but (he might have added) *that* conviction of sin which is not subservient to faith in Christ will. Graceless convictions generally, if not always, become objects of self-admiration. Here, then, Mr. M. not only determines that there is a difference between some convictions and others, but specifies wherein that difference consists. It never occurred to the self-condemned publican

that there was any thing good or holy in his humbling himself" before God. Our Lord, however, held it up as *being* so, and recommended it as an example to others.

I shall conclude this letter with a few remarks on qualifications. This is a term on which Mr. Sandeman and his followers have plentifully declaimed. It conveys to me the idea of something which entitles the party to a good, or fits him to enjoy it. With respect to entitling us, I suppose, there is no dispute. The gospel and its invitations are our title to come to Christ for salvation. And, with respect to fitting us, there is nothing of this kind that is pleadable, or which furnishes any ground of encouragement to the sinner that he shall be accepted. It is not any thing prior to the coming to Christ, but coming itself, that has the promise of acceptance. All that is pleaded for is the necessity of a state of mind suited in the nature of things to believing, and without which no sinner ever did or can believe, and which state of mind is not self-wrought, but the effect of regenerating grace.

Mr. Sandeman represents sinners as saying to preachers, "If you would preach the gospel to us, you must tell us something fit to give us joy as we presently stand, unconscious of any distinguishing *qualification.*" That the mind, at the time when it first receives gospel comfort, may be *unconscious*, not only of every distinguishing qualification but of being the subject of any thing truly good, I allow; for I believe that is the first true comfort which arises from the consideration of *what Christ* is rather than of *what we are toward him*. But to be "unconscious" of any thing truly good and actually destitute of it are two things: and so are its being necessary *in the nature of things* to our enjoying the consolations of the gospel, and its being so as a *qualification* entitling, or in some way recommending, us to the divine favor. To conceive of a sinner who is actually hardened in his sins, bloated with self-righteous pride, and full of opposition to the gospel, receiving joy "presently as he stands," is not only conceiving of rest for the soul without coming to the Saviour for it, but is in itself a contradiction. Mr. M'Lean acknowledges as much as this. "I have not the least idea," he says, "that a hard-hearted enemy of God, while such, can either receive or enjoy forgiveness." Conviction of sin then, whether it have any thing holy in it or not, is *necessary*, not, I presume, as a qualification recommending the sinner to the divine favor, but as that without which believing in Jesus were in its own nature impossible. Such are my views as to the necessity of a new heart ere the sinner can come to Christ. The joy that an unregenerate sinner can receive "pres-



ently as he stands" is any thing but that which is afforded by the good news of salvation to the chief of sinners.

## LETTER IX.

### *On certain New Testament practices.*

THAT there are serious Christians who have leaned to the Sandemanian system I have no doubt, and in people of this description I have seen things worthy of imitation. It has appeared to me that there is a greater diligence in endeavoring to understand the scriptures, and a stricter regard to what they are supposed to contain, than among many other professors of Christianity. They do not seem to rifle with either principle or practice in the manner that many do. Even in those things wherein they appear to me to misunderstand the scriptures, there is a regard toward them which is worthy of imitation. There is something, even in their rigidity, which I prefer before that trifling with truth which, among other professing Christians, often passes under the name of liberality.

These concessions, however, do not respect those who have gone entirely into the system, so as to have thoroughly imbibed its spirit, but persons who have manifested a considerable partiality in favor of the doctrine. Take the denomination as a whole, and it is not among them you can expect to see the Christian practice of the New Testament exemplified. You will find them very punctilious in some things, but very defective in others. Religion, as exhibited by them, resembles a rickety child, whose growth is confined to certain parts: it wants that lovely uniformity or proportion which constitutes the beauty of holiness.

Some of the followers of Mr. Sandeman, who in his life-time formed a society in St. Martin's-le-grand, London, and published an account of what they call their *Christian practices*, acknowledge that the command of washing one another's feet is binding "only when it can be an act of kindness to do so," and that though there be neither precept nor precedent for *family-prayer*, yet "it seems necessary for maintaining the fear of God in a family." They proceed, however, to judge those who insist on family-prayer and the first-day Sabbath, *while they disregard the feasts of charity, the holy kiss, &c.*, as persons "influenced to their religious practices not by the fear of God, the authority of Christ, or the spirit of truth." It is easy to see hence what *kind* of Christian practice that is by which these people are distinguished.\*

A punctilious adherence to the letter of scripture is in some cases commendable, even though it may extend to *the tithing of mint and cummin*; but in others it would lead you aside from the mind of Christ; and to pursue any thing to the neglect of *judgment, mercy, and the love of God*, is dangerous in the extreme.

It has long appeared to me that a great many errors have arisen from applying to moral obligations the principle which is proper in obedience to positive institutions. By confounding these, and giving to both the name of ordinances, the New Testament becomes little more than ritual, and religion is nearly reduced to a round of mechanical performances.

The distinction of obedience into *moral* and *positive* has been made by the ablest writers of almost every denomination, and must be made if we would understand the scriptures. Without it we should confound the eternal standard of right and wrong given to Israel at Sinai (the sum of which is the love of God and our neighbor) with the body of "carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation." We should also confound those precepts of the New Testament which arise from the *relations* we sustain to God and one another with those that arise merely from the *sovereign will* of the legislator, and could never have been known but for his having expressly enjoined them. Concerning the former, an inspired writer does not scruple to refer the primitive Christians to that sense of right and wrong which is implanted in the minds of men in general; saying, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." But, concerning the latter, he directs their whole attention to the revealed will of Christ. "Now I praise you brethren that you remember me in all things, and keep the *ordinances* as I delivered them unto you." "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," &c. The one is commanded because it is *right*; the other is right because it is commanded. The great principles of the former are of perpetual obligation, and know no other change than that which arises from the varying of relations and conditions; but those of the latter may be binding at one period of time, and utterly abolished at another.

We can clearly perceive that it were inconsistent with the perfections of God not to have required us to love him and one another, or to have allowed of the contrary.

quotations from it, contained in Backus's Discourse on Faith and its Influence.

\* I have not seen this pamphlet, but have taken a few

Children also must needs be required to obey their parents; for this is *right*. But it is not thus in positive institutions. Whatever wisdom there may be in them, and whatever discernment in us, we could not have known them had they not been expressly revealed; nor are they ever enforced as being in themselves *right*, but merely from the authority of the lawgiver. Of them we may say, Had it pleased God, he might in various instances have enjoined the opposites. But of the other we are not allowed to suppose it possible, or consistent with righteousness, for God to have required any thing different from that which he has required. The obligation of man to love and obey his Creator must have been coeval with his existence; but it was not till he had planted a garden in Eden, and there put the man whom he had formed, and expressly prohibited the fruit of one of the trees on pain of death, that he came under a *positive* law.

The use to be made of this distinction, in the present controversy, is to *judge in what cases we are to look for express precept or example, and in what cases we are not to look for them*. Mr. Braidwood very properly observes, "That which is morally good in its own nature is a bounden duty, although it should not be particularly commanded nor exemplified in all the word of God."—*Letters*, &c., p. 42. In obedience of this description there is not that need of minute rules and examples as in the other; but merely of general principles which naturally lead to all the particulars comprehended under them.

To require express precept or example, or to adhere in all cases to the literal sense of those precepts which are given us, in things of a moral nature, would greatly mislead us. We may, by a disregard of that for which there is no express precept or precedent, omit what is manifestly right, and by an adherence to the letter of scriptural precepts overlook the spirit of them, and do that which is manifestly wrong.

If we will do nothing without express precept or precedent, we must build no places for Christian worship, form no societies for visiting and relieving the afflicted poor, establish no schools, endow no hospitals, nor contribute any thing toward them, nor any thing toward printing or circulating the Holy Scriptures. Whether any person who fears God would on this ground consider himself excused from these duties, I cannot tell: it is on no better ground, however, that duties of equal importance have been disregarded; especially those of *family-prayer* and the *sanctification* of the Lord's day.

In Mr. Sandeman's time it was allowed that "though there was neither precept nor

precedent for *family-prayer*, yet it seemed necessary for maintaining the *fear of God in a family*." But this concession, being at variance with more favorite principles, seems to have meant nothing. It is said that family-prayer has long been disregarded by many who drink the deepest into the doctrine. With them, therefore the maintaining of "the fear of God in a family" seems to be given up. The fact has operated much against the denomination in the esteem of serious Christians, by whom they are considered as little other than a body of worldly men. Of late, the system has been *improved*. Instead of owning, as formerly, that "the fear of God seemed to require this duty," it is now held to be *unlawful*, provided any part of the family be unbelievers, seeing it is holding *communion* with them. On the same principle, unbelievers, it is said are not allowed to join in public prayer and praise, unless it be in an adjoining room, or with some kind of partition between them and the believers. In short, it is maintained by Mr. Braidwood that we ought only to join in prayer and praise with those with whom we partake of the Lord's supper."—*Letters*, pp. 31—46. Such are the consequences of confounding things moral with things positive or ceremonial.

We have no account of any particular injunctions given to Abraham respecting the ordering of his family. God had said to him in general, "Walk before me and be thou perfect;" and which, as to things of this nature, was sufficient. "I know Abraham," saith the Lord, "that he will command his children, and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord, and do justice and judgment." Can a child be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord when it never hears its parents pray for it? Paul would not have eaten the Lord's supper with the ship's company; but he made no scruple of "giving thanks to God in presence of them all" at a common meal; and this, I presume, without any partition between his company and theirs, or so much as a mental reservation in respect of the latter. To join with unbelievers in what is *not their duty* is to become partakers of other men's sins: but to allow them to join with us in what is *their duty* is not so. The believer is not at liberty to join in the prayer of unbelief: but the unbeliever is at liberty, if he can to join in the prayer of faith. To deny him this were to deny him the right of becoming a believer, and of doing what every one ought to do. We ought to pray for such things as both believers and unbelievers stand in need of: if the latter unite with us in desire, it is well for them; if not the guilt remains with themselves and not with us.



The *sanctification* of the Lord's-day is said to be very generally disregarded among the admirers of this system. Having met and kept the ordinances, they seem to have done with religion for that day, and feel at liberty to follow any amusement or worldly occupation during the remainder of it. This is Christian liberty; and the opposite is pharisaism!

So far as relates to its being the day appointed for Christian worship, rather than the seventh; that is to say, so far as it is *positive*, the keeping of it is amply supported by scripture precedent: but as to keeping the day holy to the Lord, this, being moral, is left to be inferred from general principles. This is the case as to the manner of attending to all positive institutions. No injunctions were laid on the churches with respect to their keeping the Lord's supper in a holy manner; yet in the neglect of this lay the sin of the church at Corinth. And the reasoning which the apostle used to convince them of their sin applies to the case in hand. He argues from the ordinance of breaking bread being *the Lord's* supper that turning it into their *own* supper was rendering it null and void:\* and by parity of reasoning it follows, from the first day of the week being *the Lord's-day*, that to do *our own* work, find *our own* pleasure, or speak *our own* words on that day, is to make it void. Of the former he declared, "This is not to eat the Lord's supper;" and of the latter he would, on the same principle, have declared, This is not to keep the Lord's-day.

If, on the other hand, we do every thing that is commanded in the New Testament, according to the letter of the precept, we shall in many cases overlook the true intent of it, and do that which is manifestly wrong.

The design of our Lord's precepts on prayer and alms-giving, in the Sermon on the Mount, is to censure a spirit of ostentation in these duties; but a strict conformity to the letter of them would excuse us from all *social* prayer and *public* contributions.

The design of the precept, "Resist not evil," but "if a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also," is to prohibit all private or selfish resentment, and to teach us that we ought rather to suffer wrong than go about to revenge an injury. Who does not admire the conduct of the noble Athenian who, in a council of war held for the common safety of the country, when the Spartan chief menaced him with

his cane, cried, "*Strike; but hear me?*" Such, in effect, has been the language of the martyrs of Jesus in all ages; and such is the spirit of the precept. But to contend for a literal compliance with it were to reflect on the conduct of Christ himself, who, when smitten before the high priest, did not so exemplify it, but remonstrated against the injury.

If the design of our Lord, in forbidding us to *lay up treasures on earth*, were absolutely and in all cases to prohibit the increase of property, it was his design to overthrow what the scriptures acknowledge as a dictate of nature, namely, the duty of parents to provide for their children. 2 Cor. xii. 14. True it is that men may hoard wealth in order to enrich and aggrandize their families to the neglect of present duty toward the poor and toward the cause of God: but this is the *abuse* of the principle, and ought to be corrected, and not the principle itself destroyed. Only let our own interest and that of our children, be pursued *in subordination to God*, and *in consistency with other duties*, and all will be right. The contrary practice would load the industrious poor, and prevent their ever rising above their present condition, while it screened the indolent rich, who might expend the whole of their income in self-gratification, provided they did not increase their capital.

Nor can any good reason be given, that I know of, why we should understand this precept as prohibiting in all cases the increase of property, any more than that of "*selling what we have, and giving alms*," as absolutely forbidding us to *retain* it. To be consistent, the advocates of this interpretation should dispose of all their property and distribute it among the poor. In other words, they should abolish all distinctions of rich and poor so far as concerns themselves; not only the *very* rich and *very* poor, but all distinction whatever, and be perfectly on an equality. When they shall do this, they will at least prove themselves to be sincere, and impart a weight to their censures against others which at present they do not possess.

It was not our Lord's design in this partial manner to lop off the branches of a worldly spirit; but to strike at the root of it. To *lay up treasures on earth* denotes the *desire* of amassing wealth that we may be great, and shine, or in some way consume it upon our lusts; and herein consists the evil. There is as great a difference between a character who acts on this principle and one whom God prospers in the path of duty, and in the full exercise of benevolence toward all about him, as between one who engages in the chase of worldly applause, and another who, seeking the good of those

\* I am aware that *their own supper* has been understood as referring to the *love feasts*; but the reasoning of the apostle seems to me to admit of no such meaning. How could he accuse them of making void the Lord's supper, if it was not the Lord's supper they were eating?

around him, must needs be respected and loved.

The evil which arises from such interpretations, whatever may be their tendency, does not consist in throwing civil society into a state of disorder; for though men may admit them in theory, yet they will contrive some method of practically evading them, and reconcile their consciences to it. The mischief lies in the hypocrisy, self-deception, and unchristian censures upon others, to which they give occasion.

Much has been spoken and written on "observing all things which Christ hath commanded us," and on the authority of *apostolic example*. Both are literally binding on Christians in matters of positive institution; and in things moral the spirit or design of them is indispensable: but to enforce a literal conformity in many cases would be to defeat the end, and reduce obedience to unmeaning ceremony.

In eastern countries the *washing of the feet*, after the toils of a journey, was a common and necessary refreshment; and our Lord, to teach his disciples *in love to serve one another*, took upon himself the humble office of a servant and washed their feet; enjoining upon them to do that to one another which he had done to them. But to conform to this custom where it is not practised, nor considered as necessary to be done by any one, is to defeat the end of the precept by substituting a form in the place of a humble and affectionate service. We may wash the saints' feet, and neglect to dry their clothes, or to administer necessary comfort to them when cold and weary. If, in commands of this nature, no regard is to be had to times, places, and circumstances, why do Sandemanians allow it to be binding "*only* when it can be an act of kindness to do so?"

It was customary in the east, and is still so in many countries, for men to express affection to each other by a *kiss*; and the apostles directed that this common mode of salutation should be used religiously. But in a country where the practice is principally confined to the expression of love between the sexes, or at most among relations, it is much more liable to misconstruction and abuse; and being originally a human custom, where that custom ceases though the spirit of the precept is binding, yet the form of it, I conceive, is not so.

For a man to have his *head uncovered* was once the commonly received sign of his authority, and as such was enjoined: but with *us* it is a sign of subjection. If, therefore we are obliged to wear any sign of the one or of the other in our religious assemblies, it requires to be reversed.

The apostle taught that it was a shame for a man to wear *long hair* like a woman; not that he would have concerned himself

about the length of the hair, but, this being a distinctive mark of the sexes, he appealed to *nature* itself against their being confounded; that is, against a man's appearing in the garb of a woman.

In the primitive times, Christians had their love feasts: they do not appear, however, to have been a divine appointment, but the mere spontaneous expressions of mutual affection; as when "breaking bread from house to house they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." While these feasts were conducted with propriety all was well; but in time they were abused, and then they were mentioned in language not very respectful, "These are spots in *your* feasts of charity." Had they been of divine institution, it was not their being abused that would have drawn forth such language. The Lord's supper was abused as well as they; but the abuse in that case was corrected, and the ordinance itself re-inculcated.

These brief remarks are intended to prove that, in the above particulars, Mr. Sandeman and his followers have mistaken the true intent of Christ and his apostles. But, whether it be so or not, the proportion of zeal which is expended upon them is far beyond what their importance requires. If, as a friend to believers' baptism, I cherish an overweening conceit of myself, and of my denomination, confining the kingdom of heaven to it, and shutting my eyes against the excellences of others, am I not carnal? The Jews, in the time of Jeremiah, thought themselves very secure on account of their forms and privileges. Pointing to the sacred edifice, and its divinely instituted worship, they exclaimed, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these:" but were they not carnal? In how many ways, alas, are poor blind mortals addicted to err!

When the reflecting Christian considers what contentions have been maintained about things of this nature, what divisions have been produced, and what accusations have been preferred against those who stand a loof from such strifes, as though they *did not so much as profess to observe all things which Christ has commanded*, he will drop a tear of pity over human weakness. But, when he sees men so scrupulously in such matters that they cannot conscientiously be present at any worship but their own, yet making no scruple of joining in theatrical and other vain amusements, he will be shocked, and must needs suspect something worse than weakness; something, which strains at a gnat, but can swallow a camel; something, in short, which, however good men may have been carried away by it, can hardly be conceived to have had its origin in a good man's mind.



## LETTER X.

*An inquiry into the principles on which the apostles proceeded in forming and organizing Christian churches.*

You need not be told of the fierce disputes which were first agitated by the leaders of this denomination, and which have since extended to others besides those who choose to be called after their names, concerning the order, government, and discipline of gospel churches. To write upon every minute practice found in the New Testament would be to bewilder ourselves and perplex the subject. If we can ascertain the principles on which the apostles proceeded in all they did, it will answer a much better purpose.

Far be it from me to contend for an Erastian latitude in matters of Church government and discipline, or to imagine that no divine directions are left us on the subject, but that the church must be modelled and governed according to circumstance. This were to open a door to every corruption that human ingenuity and depravity might devise. But, on the other hand, it is no less wide of the truth to consider the whole which is left us as a system of ordinances, or positive institutions, requiring in all cases the most literal and punctilious observance. Such a view of the subject, among other evil consequences, must introduce perpetual discord; seeing it aims to establish things from the New Testament which are not in it.

It may be thought that in reasoning thus I adopt the principles of the Episcopalians against the Puritans, who denied the necessity of express precept or precedent from the scriptures, which the others pleaded for. Had Episcopalians only denied this in respect of moral duties, I should have thought them in the right. It certainly is not necessary that we should have express precept or precedent for every duty we owe to our neighbors, but merely that we keep within the general principle of doing unto others as we would that they should do unto us. And the same may be said of various duties toward God. If in our thoughts, affections, prayers, or praises, we be influenced by love to his name, though his precepts will be our guide as to the general modes in which love shall be expressed, yet we shall not need them for every thing pertaining to particular duties. When Josiah, on hearing the book of the law read to him, "rent his clothes and wept," it was not in conformity with any particular precept or precedent, but the spontaneous effusion of love. The question between the Episcopalians and the Puritans did not relate to

moral obligations, but to "rites and ceremonies" in divine worship, which the church claimed a "power to decree." Hence it was common for them to urge it upon the Puritans, that if their principles were fully acted upon they must become Antipædobaptists; or, as they called them, Anabaptists;\* a proof this, not only that in their judgment there was neither precept nor precedent in the scriptures in favor of pædobaptism, but that it was in matters of *positive institution* that they claimed to act without either.

The question is, On what principles did the apostles proceed in forming and organizing Christian churches, *positive or moral*? If the former, they must have been furnished with an exact model or pattern, like that which was given to Moses in the mount, and have done all things according to it: but if the latter, they would only be furnished with general principles, comprehending, but not specifying a great variety of particulars.

That the framing of the tabernacle was positive there can be no doubt; and that a part of the religion of the New Testament is so is equally evident. Concerning this the injunctions of the apostle are minute and very express. "Be ye followers (imitators) of me as I also am of Christ."—"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the *ordinances* as I delivered them to you."—"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." But were we to attempt to draw up a formula of church government, worship, and discipline, which should include any thing more than *general outlines*, and to establish it upon express New Testament authorities, we should attempt what is impracticable.

Doubtless the apostles acted under divine direction; but, in things of a moral nature, that direction consisted not in providing them with a model or pattern, in the manner of that given to Moses, but in furnishing them with general principles, and enduing them with holy wisdom to apply them as occasions required.

We learn, from the Acts and the Epistles, that the first churches were congregations of faithful men, voluntarily united together for the stated ministration of the word, the administration of Christian ordinances, and the mutually assisting of each other in promoting the cause of Christ; that they were governed by bishops and deacons of their own choosing; that a bishop was an overseer, not of the other ministers, but of the flock of God; that the government and discipline of each church was within itself; that the gifts of the different

\* Preface to Bishop Sanderson's Sermons, Sect. 23.

members were so employed as to conduce to the welfare of the body; and that in cases of disorder, every proper means was used to vindicate the honor of Christ and reclaim the party. These, and others which might be named, are what I mean by *general principles*. They are sometimes illustrated by the incidental occurrence of examples (which examples in all *similar cases* are binding;) but it is not always so. That a variety of cases occur in our time respecting which we have nothing more than general principles to direct us, is manifest to every person of experience and reflection. We know that churches were formed, officers chosen and ordained, and prayer and praise conducted with "the understanding;" or so as to be understood by others: but in what particular manner they proceeded in each we are not told. We have no account of the formation of a single church, no ordination service, nor any such thing as a formula of worship. We are taught to sing praises to God in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, but have no inspired tunes. We have accounts of the election of church-officers: but no mention of the mode of proceeding, or how they ascertained the mind of the church. If we look for express precept or example for the removal of a pastor from one situation to another, we shall find none. We are taught however, that for the church to grow unto an holy temple in the Lord, it requires to be "fily framed together." The want of *fitness* in a connection, therefore, especially if it impede the growth of the spiritual temple, may justify a removal. Or, if there be no want of fitness, yet, if the material be adapted to occupy a more important station, a removal of it may be very proper. Such a principle may be misapplied to ambitious and interested purposes; but, if the increase of the temple be kept in view, it is lawful, and in some cases attended with great and good effects.

This instance may suffice instead of a hundred, and serves to show that the forms and orders of the New Testament church, much more than those of the Old, are founded on the reason of things. They appear to be no more than what men, possessed of the wisdom from above, would, as it were instinctively, or of their own accord, fall into, even though no specific directions should be given them.

That such were the principles on which the apostles proceeded is manifest from their own *professions*, or from the *general precepts* which they addressed to the churches. These are as follows:—"Let all things be done *edifying*." "Let all things be done *decently, and in order*."—"Follow after the things that *make for peace*, and things wherewith *one may edify*

*another*." Whatever measures had a tendency to build up the church of God and individuals in their most holy faith, these they pursued. Whatever measures approved themselves to minds endued with holy wisdom as fit and lovely, and as tending, like good discipline in an army, to the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, these they followed, and inculcated on the churches. And however worldly minds may have abused the principle, by introducing vain customs under the pretence of *decency*, it is that which, understood in its simple and original sense, must still be the test of good order and Christian discipline.

The discipline of the primitive churches occupies no prominent place in their character. It is not that ostentatious thing which, under the name of an "ordinance," has become of late a mere bone of contention. It was simply the carrying into effect the great principle of brotherly love, and the spirit with which it was exercised was that of long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, and meekness.

The way in which the apostles *actually proceeded*, in the forming and organizing of churches, corresponds with these statements. When a number of Christians were assembled together in the days of Pentecost they were the first Christian church. But at first they had no deacons and probably no pastors except the apostles: and if the *reason* of things had not required it they might have continued to have none. But in the course of things new service rose upon their hands, therefore they must have new servants to perform it;\* for, said the apostles, "It is not *reason* that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables; Wherefore brethren look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." In this proceeding we perceive nothing of the air of a ceremony, nothing like that of a punctilious attention to forms, which marks obedience to a positive institute; but merely the conduct of men endued with the wisdom from above, servants appointed when service required it, and the number of the one proportioned to the quantity of the other. All things are done "decently and in order;" all things are done "to edifying."

In the course of things, the apostles, who had supplied the place of bishops, or pastors, would be called to travel into other parts of the world, and then it is likely the church at Jerusalem would have a bishop, or bishops of their own. As the number of deacons was regulated by the work to be done, so would it be by bishops, both of this and in other churches. A large church

\* A deacon as well as a minister, means a *servant*.



where much service was to be done, required seven deacons: and where they abounded in numbers and spiritual gifts, there might be a plurality of pastors. With respect to us, where the *reason* of the thing exists, that is, where there are churches whose numbers require it, and whose ability admits of it, it is still proper;\* but for a small church to have more pastors than one, is as unnecessary as to have seven deacons. Such a rule must favor idleness, and confine useful ministers from extending their labors. To place two or three in a post which might be filled by one, must leave many other places unoccupied. Such a system is more adapted for show than for promoting the kingdom of Christ.

It may serve to illustrate and simplify the subject, if we compare the conduct of the apostles with that of a company of *missionaries* in our times. What, indeed, was an *apostle* but an inspired missionary? Allowing only for ordinary Christian missionaries being uninspired, we shall see in their history all the leading characteristics of apostolic practice.

Conceive of a church, or of a society of Christians out of a number of churches, or of "any two agreeing together," as undertaking a mission among the heathen. One of the first things they would attend to would be the selection of suitable missionaries; next, they would instruct them in the things necessary to their undertaking; and after this send them forth to preach the gospel. Such, exactly, was the process of our Lord toward his apostles. He first selected them; then, during his personal ministry, instructed them; and, after his resurrection, gave them their commission, with a rich effusion of the Holy Spirit to fit them for their undertaking.

The missionaries on arriving at the place of action would first unite in social prayer and fellowship; and this would be the first Christian church. Thus the apostles, and those who adhered to them, first met in an upper room for prayer, preparatory to their attack on the kingdom of Satan; and this little "band of about a hundred and twenty" formed the first Christian church; and, when others were converted to Christ and

joined them, they are said to be "added to the church."

Again: the first missionaries to a heathen country could not be chosen by those to whom they were sent, but by him or them who sent them; nor would their influence be confined to a single congregation, but, by a kind of parental authority, would extend to all the societies that might be raised by means of their labors. It would be different with succeeding pastors who might be raised up from among the converts: they would of course be chosen by their brethren, and their authority be confined to those who elected them. Thus the apostles were not constituted such by the churches, but received their appointment immediately from Christ; nor was their authority limited to any particular church, but extended to all. In this they stand distinguished from ordinary pastors, who were elected by the churches, and whose authority is confined to the churches that elected them.

Again: The first missionaries to a heathen country would be employed in the *planting* of churches wherever proper materials were found for the purpose; and, if the work so increased upon their hands as to be too much for them, they would depute others whom God should gift and qualify, *like-minded* with themselves, to assist them in it. Some one person at least of this description would be present at the formation and organization of every church, to see to it that all things were done "decently and in order." And, if there were any other churches in the neighborhood, their elders and messengers would doubtless be present, and, to express their brotherly concurrence, would join in it. Thus the apostles planted churches; and, when elders were ordained, the people chose them, and they, by the solemn laying on of hands, invested them with the office (Acts xiv. 23.) and, when the work increased upon their hands, they appointed such men as Timothy and Titus as evangelists, to "set things in order" in their stead. 2 Tim. ii. 2; Tit. i. 5. In these ordinations, a Paul or a Titus would preside; but the other elders who were present would unite in brotherly concurrence, and in importuning a blessing on the parties: and hence there would be the "laying on of hands of the presbytery," or elders.

I may add, though it does not immediately respect any question here at issue, if the first missionaries, and those appointed by them, planted churches, set them in order, and presided at the ordination of elders, it was not because the same things would not have been *valid* if done by others, but because they would not have been *done*. Let but churches be planted, set in

\* I say *whose ability admits of it*; for there is equal proof from the New Testament that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel, as there is of a plurality of elders. But the zeal for the latter has not always been accompanied by a zeal for the former. If the term elder must be understood to be not only a term of office, but of the pastoral office exclusively, and a plurality of them be required, why is not a plurality of them supported? The office of elder in those churches which are partial to this system is little more than nominal; for, while an elder is employed like other men in the necessary cares of life, he cannot ordinarily fulfil the duties of his office. *No man that warreth in this warfare (unless it be in aid of a poor church) ought to entangle himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

order, and scripturally organized, and, whether it be by the missionaries or succeeding native pastors, all is good and acceptable to Christ. And such, I conceive, is the state of things with respect to the apostles and succeeding ministers. The same things which were done by the apostles were done by others appointed by them; and had they been done by elders whom they had not appointed, provided the will of Christ had been properly regarded, they would not have objected to their *validity*. This is certainly true in some particulars, and I see not why it should not be in all. Paul left Timothy at Ephesus *that he might charge some that they taught no other doctrine*; but, if the Ephesian teachers had been themselves attached to the truth, neither Paul nor Timothy would have been offended with them for having superseded their interference. He also left Titus in Crete *to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city*; but, if the Cretians themselves had had sufficient wisdom and virtue to have regulated their own affairs by the word of God, I believe their order would not have been reckoned disorder. Had there been elders already ordained among them competent to assist in the ordination of others, if we may judge from the general tenor of apostolic practice, instead of objecting to the validity of their proceedings, both Paul and Titus would, though absent in the flesh, have been with them in the spirit, "joying and beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ."

The sum is, that church government and discipline are not a body of ceremonies, but a few general principles and examples, sufficient for all practical purposes, but not sufficient to satisfy those who, in New Testament directions, expect to find an Old Testament ritual. It is not difficult to perceive the wisdom of God in thus varying the two dispensations. The Jewish church was an army of soldiers, who had to go through a variety of forms in learning their discipline: the Christian church is an army going forth to battle. The members of the former were taught punctilious obedience, and led with great formality through a variety of religious evolutions: but those of the latter (though they also must keep their ranks, and act in obedience to command whenever it is given) are required to attend, not so much to the mechanical as to the mental, not so much to the minute observation of forms as to the spirit and design of them. The order of the one would almost seem to be appointed for order's sake: but in that of the other the utility of every thing is apparent. The obedience of the former was that of children; the latter of sons arrived at maturer age.

As our Saviour abolished the Jewish law of divorce, and reduced marriage to its original simplicity; so, having abolished the form and order of the church as appointed by Moses, he reduced it to what, as to its first principles, it was from the beginning, and to what must have corresponded with the desires of believers in every age. It was natural for "the sons of God," in the days of Seth, to assemble together, and "call upon the name of the Lord;" and their unnatural fellowship with unbelievers brought on the deluge. And, even under the Jewish dispensation, wicked men, though descended from Abraham, were not considered as Israelites *indeed*, or *true* citizens of Zion. The friends of God were then the "companions of those that feared him." They "spake often one to another," and assembled for mutual edification. What then is gospel church-fellowship but godliness ramified, or the principle of holy love reduced to action? There is scarcely a precept on the subject of church discipline but what may, in substance, be found in the proverbs of Solomon.

It does not follow hence that all forms of worship and of church government are indifferent, and left to be accommodated to times, places, and circumstances. The principles or general outlines of things are marked out, and we are not at liberty to deviate from them; nor are they to be filled up by worldly policy, but by a pure desire of carrying them into effect according to their true intent: to which may be added, that, so far as they are exemplified in the New Testament, it is our duty in similar cases to follow the example.

It does follow, however, that scripture precedent, important as it is, is not binding on Christians in things of a *moral nature*, unless the *reason* of the thing be the same in both cases. Of this proof has been offered in Letter IX., relative to the washing of the feet, the kiss of charity, &c. It also follows that, in attending to *positive institutions* neither express precept nor precedent is necessary, in what respects the *holy manner* of performing them, nor binding in regard of merely accidental circumstances, which do not properly belong to them. It required neither express precept nor precedent to make it the duty of the Corinthians, when meeting to celebrate the Lord's supper, to do it soberly and in the fear of God, nor to render the contrary a sin. There are also circumstances which may, on some occasions, accompany a positive institution, and not on others, which being, therefore, no part of it, are not binding. It is a fact that the Lord's supper was first celebrated with *unleavened bread*; for no leaven was to be found at the time in all the Jewish habitations; but no mention being made of



this, either in the institution or in the repetition of it by the apostle, we conclude it was a mere accidental circumstance, no more belonging to the ordinance than its having been in "a large upper room." It is a fact, too, that our Lord and his disciples sat in a reclining posture at the supper, after the manner of sitting at their ordinary meals; yet none imagine this to be binding upon us. It is also a fact, with regard to the time, that our Saviour first sat down with his disciples on the evening of the fifth day of the week, the night in which he was betrayed; but though that was a memorable night, and is mentioned by the apostle in connection with the supper, yet no one supposes it to be binding upon us; especially as we know it was afterwards celebrated on the first day of the week by the church at Troas.

Much has been advanced, however, in favor of the first day of the week as exclusively the time for the celebration of the Lord's supper, and of its being still binding on Christians. A weekly communion might, for any thing we know, be the general practice of the first churches; and certainly there can be no objection to the thing itself; but to render it a term of communion is laying bonds in things wherein Christ has laid none. That the supper was celebrated on the first day of the week by the church at Troas is certain; that it was so every first day of the week is possible, perhaps probable; but the passage does not prove that it was so; and still less, as Mr. Braidwood affirms, that "it can only be dispensed on that day."—*Letters*, p. 44. The words of the institution are, "*As often as ye eat,*" &c., without determining how often. Those who would make these terms so indeterminate as not to denote frequency, and consequently to be no rule at all as to time, do not sufficiently consider their force. The term "*often,*" we all know, denotes frequency; and "*as often*" denotes the degree of that frequency; but every comparative supposes the positive. There can be no degree of frequency where frequency itself is not. It might as well be said that the words, How *much* she hath glorified herself, so *much* torment give her, convey no idea of Babylon having glorified herself more than others, but merely of her punishment being proportioned to her pride, be it much or little.

The truth appears to be that the Lord's supper ought to be frequently celebrated; but the exact time of it is a circumstance which does not belong to the ordinance itself.

Similar remarks might be made on *female* communion, a subject on which a great deal has been written of late years in the baptismal controversy. Whether there

be express precept or precedent for it, or not, is of no consequence; for the distinction of sex is a mere circumstance in nowise affecting the qualifications required, and therefore not belonging to the institution. It is of just as much account as whether a believer be a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free man: that is, it is of no account at all; "for there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; but all are one in Christ Jesus." Express precept or precedent might as well be demanded for the parties being tall or low, black or white, sickly or healthy, as for their being male or female.

To accommodate the spirit of New Testament practice to the fluctuating manners and inclinations of men is certainly what ought not to be: but neither can it be denied that many of the apostolic practices were suited to the state of things at the time, and would not have been what they were if circumstances had been different. To instance in their proceedings on the *seventh* and *first* days of the week: It is well known that, in preaching to the Jews, and others who attended with them, they generally took the *seventh* day of the week;\* the reason of which doubtless was its being the day in which they were to be met with at their synagogues. Hence it is that on the *first* day of the week so little is said of their preaching to unbelievers, and so much of the celebration of Christian ordinances, which is represented as the specific object of their coming together.† But the same motive that induced the apostles to preach to unbelievers chiefly on the seventh day of the week would, in our circumstances, have induced them to preach to them on the first, that being now the day on which they ordinarily assemble together. In countries where Christianity has so far obtained as for the legislature to respect the first day of the week as a day of rest, instead of having now and then an individual come into our assemblies, as the primitive churches had, and as churches raised in heathen countries must still have, we have multitudes who on that day are willing to hear the word. In such circumstances the apostles would have preached both to believers and unbelievers, and administered Christian ordinances, all on the same day. To frame our worship in things of this nature after apostolic example, without considering the reasons of their conduct, is to stumble in darkness, instead of walking as children of the light. Yet this is the kind of apostolic practice by which the churches have been teased and divided, the great work of preaching the gospel to the ungodly neglect-

\* Acts xiii. 42; xviii. 4; xvi. 13.

† 1 Cor. xi. 20. Acts xx. 7.

ed, and Christianity reduced to litigious trifling.

If the practice of Christ and his apostles be in all cases binding upon Christians, whether the reason of the thing be the same or not, why do they not eat the Lord's supper with unleavened bread, and in a reclining posture? And why do they not assemble together *merely* to celebrate this ordinance, and that on a Lord's-day evening? From the accounts in 1 Cor. xi. 20, and Acts xx. 7, two things appear to be evident: First: That the celebration of the Lord's supper was the *specific object* of the coming together both of the church at Corinth and of that at Troas: the former came together (professedly) *to eat the Lord's supper*; the latter are said to have come together *to break bread*. Secondly: That it was on the *evening* of the day. This is manifest not only from its being called the Lord's *supper* but from the Corinthians making it their *own supper*, and from its being followed at Troas by a sermon from Paul which required "lights," and continued till "midnight."

I do not mean to say that the church at either Corinth or Troas had no other worship during the first day of the week than this; but that this was attended to as a distinct object of assembling, and, if there were any other, after the other was over.

It may be thought that these were merely *accidental circumstances*, and therefore not binding on us. It does not appear to me, however, that we are at liberty to turn the Lord's supper into a breakfast. But if we be, and choose to do so, let us not pretend to a punctilious imitation of the first churches.

It is well known to be a peculiarity in Sandemanian societies not to determine any question by a *majority*. They, like the first churches, must be of *one mind*; and, if there be any dissentients who cannot be convinced, they are excluded. Perfect unanimity is certainly desirable, not only in the great principles of the gospel, but in questions of discipline, and even in the choice of officers; but how if this be unattainable? The question is, whether it be more consistent with the spirit and practice of the New Testament for the greater part of the church to forbear with the less, or, Diotrophes-like, to cast them out of the church; and this for having according to the best of their judgments acted up to the scriptural directions? One of these modes of proceeding must of necessity be pursued, for there is no middle course; and if we loved one another with genuine Christian affection we could not be at a loss which to prefer. The New Testament speaks of an election of seven deacons, but says nothing on the mode of its being conducted. Now,

considering the number of members in the church at Jerusalem, unless they were directed in their choice by inspiration which there is no reason to think they were, it is more than a thousand to one that those seven persons who were chosen were not the persons whom every individual member first proposed. What then can we suppose them to have done? They might discuss the subject till they became of one mind: or, which is much more likely, the less number, perceiving the general wish and considering that their brethren had understanding as well as they, might peaceably give up their own opinions to the greater, "submitting one to another in the fear of God." But supposing a hundred of the members had said as follows: "Without reflecting on any who have been named, we think two or three other brethren more answerable to the qualifications required by the apostles than some of them; but, having said this, we are willing to acquiesce in the general voice"—should they or would they have been excluded for this? Assuredly the exclusions of the New Testament were for very different causes!

The statements of the society in St. Martin's-le-grand on this subject are sophistical, self-contradictory, and blasphemous. "Nothing," say they, "is decided by the vote of the *majority*." In some cases indeed there are dissenting voices. The reasons of the dissent are thereupon proposed and considered. *If they are scriptural*, the whole church has cause to change its opinion; *if not*, and the person persists in his opposition *to the word of God* the church is bound to reject him." But who is to judge whether the reasons of the dissentients be scriptural or not? The majority no doubt, and an opposition to their opinion is an opposition *to the word of God*!

Humility and love will do great things toward unanimity; but this forced unanimity is the highest refinement of spiritual tyranny. It is a being compelled to believe as the church believes, and that not only on subjects clearly revealed and of great importance, but in matters of mere opinion, in which the most upright minds may differ, and to which no standard can apply. What can he who *exalteth himself above all that is called God* do more than set up his decisions as *the word of God*, and require men on pain of excommunication to receive them?

## LETTER XI.

### *On the Kingdom of Christ.*

YOU are aware that the admirers of Messrs. Glass and Sandeman generally



value themselves on their "clear views of the gospel, and of the nature of Christ's kingdom;" and I doubt not but they have written things concerning both which deserve attention. It appears to me, however, that they have done much more in detecting error than in advancing truth; and that their writings on the kingdom of Christ relate more to what it is not, than to what it is. Taking up the sentence of our Lord, "My kingdom is not of this world," they have said much, and much to purpose, against worldly establishments of religion, with their unscriptural appendages; but, after all, have they shown what the kingdom of Christ is; and does their religion, taken as a whole, exemplify it in its genuine simplicity? If writing and talking about "simple truth," would do it, they could not be wanting; but it will not. Is there not as much of a worldly spirit in their religion as in that which they explode, only that it is of a different species? Nay, is there not a greater defect among them in what relates to righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, than will often be found in what they denigrate Babylon itself?

A clear view of the nature of Christ's kingdom would hardly be supposed to overlook the apostle's account of it. "The kingdom of God," he says, "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." From this statement we should expect to find the *essence* of it placed in things moral, rather than in things ceremonial; in things clearly revealed, rather than in matters of doubtful disputation; and in things of prime importance, rather than in those of but comparatively small account. We certainly should not expect to see the old error of the Pharisees revived, that of tithing mint and rue to the neglect of judgment, mercy, and the love of God.

We should also expect the most eminent *subjects* of this kingdom would be men who, while they conscientiously attend to the positive institutions of Christ, abhor the thought of making them a substitute for sobriety, righteousness, and godliness: men who need not a special precept for every duty; but, drinking deeply into the law of love, are ready, like the father of the faithful, to obey all its dictates.

And, as the kingdom of God consists in *peace*, we should expect its most eminent subjects to be distinguished by that dove-like spirit which seeks the things which make for peace. They may indeed be called upon to contend for the faith, and that earnestly; but contention will not be their element, nor will their time be chiefly occupied in conversing on the errors, absurdities, and faults of others. Considering *bitter zeal and strife in the heart* as belonging to the wisdom that descendeth not from above.

but which is earthly, sensual, and devilish, they are concerned to lay aside every thing of the kind, and to cherish the spirit of a new-born babe.

Finally: The *joys* which they possess, in having heard and believed the good news of salvation, may be expected to render them dead to those of the world; so much so, at least, that they will have no need to repair to the diversions of the theatre, or other carnal pastimes, in order to be happy; nor will they dream of such methods of asserting their Christian liberty, and opposing pharisaism.

Whether these marks of Christ's subjects be eminently conspicuous, among the people alluded to, those who are best acquainted with them are able to determine; but, so far as appears from their writings, whatever excellences distinguish them, they do not consist in things of this nature.

It is remarkable that the apostle, after representing the kingdom of God as being "not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit," adds, "for he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." This not only shows what the prominent features of Christ's kingdom are, but affords a striking contrast to the kingdom contended for by Sandemanians, which, instead of recommending itself to both God and man, would seem rather to have been copied from the religion of that people who "pleased not God, and were contrary to all men."

The substitution of forms and ceremonies for the love of God and man is one of the many ways in which depravity has been wont to operate. What else is Paganism, apostate Judaism, Popery and many other things which pass for religion? And whether the same principle does not pervade the system in question, and even constitute one of its leading features, let the impartial observer judge. If it does not place the kingdom of God in meat and drink, it places it in things analogous to them, rather than in righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit.

It is true the forms contended for in this case are not the same as in many others, being such only as are thought to be enjoined in the scriptures. That many of them arise from a misunderstanding of the scriptures, I have endeavored to show in a former letter; but, whether it be so or not, if an improper stress be laid upon them they may be as injurious as though they were not scriptural. When the brazen serpent became an idol it was as pernicious as other idols. The tithing of herbs, though in itself right, yet, being done to the neglect of

"weightier matters," became the very characteristic of hypocrisy.

It has been said that obedience to the least of God's commands cannot be unfriendly to obedience to the greatest; and if it be genuine it cannot; but to deny the possibility of the great things of God's law being set aside by a fondness for little things, is to deny the fact just referred to, and discovers but a slender acquaintance with the human heart, which certainly can burn in zeal for a ceremony, when, as to the love of God and man, it is as cold as death.

If the nature of Christ's kingdom were placed in those things in which the apostle places it, the government and discipline of the church would be considered as *means* and not as *ends*. The design of order and discipline in an army is to enable it to encounter the enemy to advantage; and such was the order and discipline of the primitive churches. It was still, peaceable and affectionate, without parade and without disputes. It consisted in all things being done to edifying, and in such an arrangement of energies as that every gift should be employed to the best advantage in building up the church and attacking the kingdom of Satan. But is this the order and discipline of which so much has of late been written? Surely not! From the days of Glass and Sandeman until now, it does not appear to have been their *object* to convert men to Christ from among the ungodly, but to make proselytes of other Christians. And is this to understand the true nature of Christ's kingdom? If there were not another fact, this alone is sufficient to prove that their religion, though it may contain a portion of truth, and though godly men may have been mislead by it, yet taken as a whole, is not of God. There is not a surer mark of false religion than its tendency and aim being to make proselytes to ourselves rather than converts to Christ. Acts xx. 30.

That there is neither tendency in the system nor aim in those who enter fully into it to promote the kingdom of Christ, is manifest, and easily accounted for. They neither expect, nor, as it would seem, *desire* its progress, but even look with a jealous eye on all opinions and efforts in favor of its enlargement; as though, should it be greatly extended, it must needs be a kingdom of this world! This, I am aware, is a serious charge, but it does not originate with me. Mr. Braidwood, of Edinburgh, who must be allowed to have the best opportunities of knowing the system and its adherents, and who cannot be supposed to write under the influence of prejudice, seeing he acknowledges he has "learned many things from the ancient writings of this class of professing Christians in relation to the simple doc-

trine of the gospel and the nature of Christ's kingdom;" Mr. Braidwood, I say, writes as follows: "I feel it incumbent on me to warn the disciples of Jesus against that state of mind which makes them slow to believe the prophecies relating to the extent of the Redeemer's kingdom." "It is remarkable that some Gentile Christians now show a disposition toward the Jews, similar to that which, in the apostolic age, the Jews manifested toward the Gentiles, namely a *dislike to their salvation!* It is truly mortifying to reflect that the greater number of those who indulge this state of mind are persons much instructed in the knowledge of the gospel and of the things concerning the kingdom of God. They call it a *Jewish notion* to expect an extensive influence of the word of God among all nations. The very opposite is the fact; for the apostle Paul, describing his countrymen, says, 'They please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak unto the Gentiles that they might be saved.' And even *believing* Jews were not very willing to acknowledge the first Gentile converts, and were surprised when they heard that God had also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life. But the apostle thus describes the spirit by which he regulated his own conduct: 'I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved!'"

"The freeness, of divine grace, its sovereignty, its opposition to the most darling inclinations of the human heart, the spiritual and heavenly nature of Christ's kingdom—all these have been used as arguments against the conversion of the Jews, or any signal prosperity of the gospel among the Gentiles! And they whose hearts' desire and prayer to God for Israel, and for the nations, is that they may be saved, are accused of ignorance of the gospel, and of wishing to see a corrupt faith prevail, especially if they dare to express a hope that their prayers will be answered!"

It would seem, hence, to be the interest of this class of professing Christians that the world and the church should continue what they are. They glory in the latter being few in number: if, therefore, any considerable part of mankind were to embrace even what they account the truth, they would have nothing left in comparison whereof to glory!

Mr. Braidwood addresses the party on whom he animadverts as follows: "Will the purest and simplest views that can be entertained of the truth concerning Jesus have any tendency to make us less concerned about the salvation of men, and more anxious to darken the things revealed in the scriptures concerning the success of the gospel among all nations? No, my friend,



let us beware of imputing to the gospel a state of mind which so ill accords with its genuine influence, and which can arise only from *prejudice and from mistaken views of the Messiah's kingdom*. That glorious kingdom, instead of dying away, as some have supposed, like an expiring lamp, before the advent of its eternal king, shall break in pieces and consume all opposing kingdoms, and shall stand forever, although its own subjects, acting consistently, use no carnal weapons."—*Letters*, &c. pp. 28, 30.

The writer to whom these excellent remarks are addressed, signs himself *Palæmon*. I know not who he is; but, as the signature is the same as that affixed to Mr. Sandeman's *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*, I conclude he is and wishes to be thought a Sandemanian. Mr. Braidwood calls him his "friend," and speaks of his being "mortified" by these his erroneous sentiments, as though he had a feeling for Palæmon's general creed, or that "instruction in the knowledge of the gospel and of the things concerning the kingdom of God" which he and others had received. For my part, without deciding upon the state of individuals, I am persuaded that these people, with all their professions of "clear views," "simple truths," and "simple belief," have imbibed a corrupt and dangerous system of doctrine.

Palæmon, whoever he is, would do well to *examine himself whether he be in the faith*: and, were I in Mr. Braidwood's place, I should feel it to be my duty to re-examine what I had "learned from the ancient writings of this class of professing Christians relative to the simple doctrine of the gospel and the nature of Christ's kingdom;" and to ask myself what I had asked my friend, *Whether that can be pure and simple truth which is productive of such effects?*

## LETTER XII.

*The spirit of the system compared with that of primitive Christianity.*

You are aware that doctrines, whether true or false, if really believed, become principles of action. They are a mould into which the mind is cast, and from which it receives its impression. An observant eye will easily perceive a *spirit* which attends different religions, and different systems of the same religion; which over and above the diversities arising from natural temper, will manifest itself in their respective adherents. Paganism, Mahomedanism, Deism, apostate Judaism, and various systems which have appeared under the name of Christianity, have each discovered a spirit of its own; and so has Christianity itself.

Thus it was from the beginning: those who received "another doctrine" received with it "another spirit;" and hence we are told of "the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error;" he that had the one was said to be "of God," and he that had the other "not of God."

I hope it will be understood that in what I write on this subject there is no reference to individuals, nor any wish to judge men indiscriminately by the names under which they pass, nor any desire to charge the evils which may belong to the system on all who have discovered a partiality in its favor, or who have defended particular parts of it. I shall only take a brief review of the spirit which is of God, and compare that of Mr. Sandeman and the generality of his admirers with it.

First: The spirit of primitive Christianity was full of *the devout and the affectionate*. Of this there needs little to be said in a way of proof, as the thing is evident to any one who is acquainted with the Bible. The Psalms of David are full of it; and so is the New Testament. Primitive Christianity was the religion of *love*. It breathed grace, mercy, and peace, on all that loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Among such it would not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Its faithfulness was tempered with brotherly kindness. It had compassion for the ignorant, and them that were out of the way; and, while siding with God against the wicked, it wept over them, and was willing to do or suffer any thing, if by any means it might save some of them. But is this Sandemanianism? You will scarcely meet with terms expressive of devotion or affection in any of its productions, unless it be to hold them up to ridicule. It appears to be at war with all devotion and devout men. Its most indignant opposition and bitterest invectives are reserved for them. Its advocates would have you think, indeed that it is *blind* devotion, like that of the Pharisees, at which they sneer: but where are we to look for that which is *not* so, and with which they are *not* at war? Is it to be found out of their own connections? Every thing there which has the appearance of religion is pharisaism. It must therefore be among themselves if any where. But if the spirit of "love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness," &c. prevail in their assemblies, it is singular that the same spirit should not appear in their writings. Who that has read them will say that their general tendency is to promote the love of either God or man? Toward worldly men, indeed, who make no pretence to religion, the system seems to bear a friendly aspect: but it discovers no concern for *their* salvation. It would seem to have no tears to shed over

a perishing world; and even looks with a jealous eye on those that have, glorying in the paucity of its numbers!

Whether the advocates of this system perceive the discordance between their own spirit and that of David, or whatever is the reason, it is common for them to apply to Christ a great deal of what he manifestly wrote of his own devout feeling. Christ, it seems, might be the subject of devotion without any danger of self-righteous pride; but we cannot, and therefore must have little or nothing to do with it.

It is among people of this description that religious *feelings* and *affections* are ordinarily traduced. There are no doubt, many enthusiastic feelings, which have no true religion in them. There is such a thing too as to make a Saviour of them as well as of our duties. But we must not on this account exclude the one any more than the other. President Edwards, in his *Treatise on Religious Affections*, has proved beyond all reasonable contradiction that the essence of true religion lies in them. In reading that work, and Mr. Sandeman's Letters, we may see many of the same things exposed as enthusiastic; but the one is an oil that breaketh not the head, the other an effusion of pride and bitterness. The former while rejecting what is naught, retains the savor of pure, humble and holy religion: but the latter is as one who should propose to remove the disorders of the head by means of a guillotine.

It has been observed that every religion which, instead of arising from love to the truth, has its origin in *dislike* or *opposition*, even though it be to error, will come to nothing. You may sometimes see the principal inhabitants of a village fall out with the clergyman, perhaps on account of some difference on the subject of tithes, and proceed to build a place for dissenting worship: also dissenting congregations themselves will sometimes divide from mere antipathy to the preacher, or from offence taken at some of the people: but did you ever know such undertakings productive of much good? When we adhere to a system of religion from opposition to something else, we do not so much regard it for what it *is* as for what it *is not*. Whatever good, therefore, there may be in it, it will do us no good, and we shall go on waxing worse and worse. It is remarkable that the Sadducees, according to Prideaux, professed, at their outset, *the strictest adherence to the written word, utterly renouncing the traditions of the elders, which the Pharisees had agreed to hold*. In a little time, however, they rejected a great part of the word itself, and its most important doctrines, such as the resurrection and a future life. This was no more than might have been expected; for the origin of the

system was not *attachment* to the word, but *dislike* to the Pharisees.

How far these remarks apply to the religion in question, let those who are best acquainted with it judge. It doubtless contains some important truth, as did Sadduceism at its outset; but the spirit which pervades it must render it doubtful whether this be held for its own sake so much as from *opposition* to other principles. If truth be loved for its own sake, it will occupy our minds irrespective of the errors which are opposed to it, and whether they exist or not. But by the strain of writing and conversation which prevails in this connection, it would seem that the supposed absurdities of others are the life of their religion, and that if these were once to cease their zeal would expire with them. It is the vulture, and not the dove, that is apparent in all their writings. Who will say that Mr. Sandeman sought the good of his opponents, when all through his publications he took every opportunity to hold them up to contempt; and with evident marks of pleasure to describe them and their friends as walking in *a devout path to hell*? The same is manifestly the spirit of his followers, though they may not possess his sarcastic talents. But are these the weapons of the Christian warfare? Supposing Flavel, Boston, the Erskines, &c., to have been bad men, was this the way to deal with them? Is there no medium between flattery and malignity?

Mr. Sandeman would persuade us that Paul was of his "temper."\* Paul was certainly in earnest, and resisted error wherever he found it. He does not, however, treat those who build on a right foundation, though they raise a portion of what will be ultimately consumed, as enemies to the truth.† And in his conduct, even to the enemies of Christ, I recollect no sarcastic sneers, tending to draw upon them the contempt of mankind, but every thing calculated to do them good. If, however, it were not so, he must have practised differently from what he wrote. "The servant of the Lord," he says in his Epistle to Timothy, "must not *strive* (as for mastery;) but be *gentle* unto all men; in *meekness* instructing those that oppose themselves: if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." Paul would have instructed and intreated those whom Mr. Sandeman scorned.

There is a *calmness*, I acknowledge, in the advocates of this doctrine, which distinguishes their writings from the low and fulsome productions of the English Antinomians. But calmness is not always opposed to bitterness: on the contrary, it may

\* Epistolary Correspondence, p. 9.

† 1 Cor. iii. 11—15.



be studied for the very purpose of concealing it. "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his sayings were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."

The only thing that I know of which has the appearance of love is that attachment which they have to one another, and which they consider as *love for the truth's sake*. But even here there are things which I am not able to reconcile. Love for the truth's sake unites the heart to every one *in proportion as he appears to embrace it*: but the nearer you approach to these people, provided you follow not with them, so much the more bitter are their invectives. Again: Love for the truth's sake takes into consideration its practical effects. It was truth embodied in the spirit and life that excited attachment of the apostle John: "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children *walking in truth*." But that which excites their love seems to be the "clear views" which they conceive their friends to entertain above other professing Christians. Once more: Love, be it for the sake of what it may, will so unite us to one another as to render separation painful, and lead to the use of all possible means of preventing it. But such is the discipline of those who drink into these principles, that, for differences which others would consider as objects of forbearance, they can separate men from their communion in considerable numbers, with little or no apparent concern. I can reconcile such things with self-love; but not with *love for the truth's sake*.

Secondly: The spirit of primitive Christianity was a spirit of *meekness and humility*. Of this Christ himself was the great pattern; and they that would be his disciples must "learn of him who was meek and lowly of heart." They were unbelievers, and not Christians, who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." He that would be wise was required to become a fool that he might be wise.

The apostle Paul, notwithstanding his high attainments in the knowledge of Christ, reckoned himself as knowing nothing comparatively, desiring above all things "that he might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable unto his death." If any man "thought that he knew any thing," he declared that he knew "nothing yet as he ought to know." But is this the spirit of the system in question? One of the first things that presents itself is a pretence to something very nearly akin to infallibility; an imposing air in all its decisions, tending to bear down timid spirits, especially as the sincerity and consequently the Christianity of the party is suspend-

ed upon his entirely yielding himself up to it.

If it be necessary to become fools that we may be wise, how are we to account for those "clear views of the gospel" of which these people boast? They have given abundant proof that they account *others* fools who do not see with them; and they may account *themselves* to have been such till they imbibed their present principles; but, if any symptoms have appeared of their being fools in their own eyes *from that time forward*, they have escaped my observation. Instead of a self-diffident spirit, which treats with respect the understanding of others, and implores divine direction, no sooner have these principles taken possession of a man than they not only render him certain that he is in the right, but instantly qualify him to pronounce on those who follow not with him as destitute of the truth.

We may be told, however, that there is one species of pride, at least, of which the system cannot be suspected, namely, that of *self-righteousness*, seeing it is that against which its abettors are constantly declaiming. But he that would know the truth must not take up with mere professions. If a self-righteous spirit consist in "trusting in themselves that they are righteous, and despising others," I see not how they are to be acquitted of it. A self-righteous spirit and its opposite will be allowed to be drawn with sufficient promineny in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The question is, which of these characters is exemplified by those who enter fully into the Sandemanian system? Is it the publican? Look at it. I am aware that he is the favorite of the party, and so he is of other parties; for you never heard of any who were the professed advocates of the Pharisee; but are they of the *spirit* of the publican? Rather, are they not manifestly of the spirit of the Pharisee, who looked down with scorn upon his fellow-worshipper?

Mr. Braidwood, referring to a late publication by one of this class of professing Christians, who calls himself *Simplex*, writes as follows: "The work referred to seems intended chiefly to show how much *Simplex*, and they who agree with him, *despise others*, and how far they *alone* are from *trusting to themselves that they are righteous*. This their apparent inconsistency, their confident assertions when no proof is given, their unfeeling and indiscriminate censures (which therefore cannot be always just,) and their fearless anathemas against all who follow not with them, prevent them from obtaining a hearing, not only from those whom they might be warranted to consider as false professors, but from disci-

ples of Christ, who need to be taught the way of God more perfectly. And in this also they glory.

"If they would suffer an exhortation from a fellow-sinner, I would entreat them to recollect that the Pharisee, praying in the temple, disdained the publican, while the publican disdained no man and had nothing to say except what regarded himself and THE MOST HIGH. 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' They will never successfully combat self-righteousness till they themselves become *poor and of a contrite spirit*. The most effectual way to condemn pride is to give an *example* of humility.

"Self-abasement corresponds with the humbling doctrine of Christ crucified; while the indulgence of an opposite spirit, in connection with clear views of the freedom and sovereignty of divine grace, presents a most unnatural and unedifying object—the publican turning the chase upon the Pharisee, and combating him with his own weapons! Nay, he who professes to account himself the chief of sinners, having once begun to imitate an example so repugnant to the genuine influence of the doctrine for which he contends, now proceeds to attack all who come in his way—self-condemned publicans, not entirely of his own mind, as well as proud Pharisees, avowing their impious claims upon the Divine Being. May we not ask, *Who art thou that judgest?*"—*Letters, &c., Introduction.*

As to Mr. Braidwood's allowing them to possess "clear views of the freedom and sovereignty of divine grace," I do not understand how such views can accompany, and still less produce, such a spirit as he has described; but, with regard to the spirit itself, it is manifestly drawn from life, and is of greater effect than if he had written a volume on the subject. Whether his observations do not equally apply to that *marked separation* of church-members from others in public worship, said to be practised of late in Ireland, and to which he refers in page 32, let those who have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil judge.

Lastly: The spirit of primitive Christianity was *catholic* and *pacific*. Its language is, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." "As many as walk by this rule (that is, the cross of Christ,) peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." "All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours, grace be unto them, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

There were cases in which the apostles and first Christians were obliged to withdraw even from *brethren* who walked dis-

orderly; but this would give them pain. And, if the disordered state of the Christian world at present render it necessary for some of the friends of Christ to withdraw from others, it must needs, to a truly good man, be a matter of deep regret. It will be his concern, too, to diminish the breach rather than to widen it: to consider the things wherein he agrees with others, and, as far as he conscientiously can, to act with them. If we see individuals, or a community, who, instead of such regret, are generally employed in censuring all who follow not with them, as enemies to the truth; and, instead of acting with them in things wherein they are agreed, are studious to render the separation as wide as possible, and glory in it—can we hesitate to say this is not Christianity?

There is a zeal which may properly be denominated *catholic*, and one which may as properly be denominated *sectarian*. It is not supposed that any man, or body of men, can be *equally* concerned in promoting Christ's interest in all places. As our powers are limited, we must each build the wall, as it were, over against our own houses. Nor are we obliged to be *equally* concerned for the prosperity of all religious undertakings in which the parties may be in the main on the side of Christ. It is right that we should be most interested in that which approaches the nearest to truth and true religion. But true catholic zeal will nevertheless have the good of the universal church of Christ for its grand object, and will rejoice in the prosperity of every denomination of Christians, *in so far* as they appear to have the mind of Christ. Those who builded the wall against their own houses would not consider themselves as the only builders, but would bear good will to their brethren, and keep in view the rearing of the *whole* wall, which should encompass the city. As it is not our being of the religion of Rome, nor of any other which happens to be favored by the state, that determines our zeal to be catholic, so it is not our being of a sect or party of Christians, or endeavoring with Christian meekness and frankness to convince others of what we account the mind of Christ, that gives it the character of sectarian. It is *a being more concerned to propagate those things wherein we differ from other Christians than to impart the common salvation*. Where this is the case we shall so limit the kingdom of heaven to ourselves as nearly to confine our good wishes, prayers, and efforts to our own denomination, and treat all others as if we had nothing to do with them in religious matters but in a way of censure and dispute. Wherein this kind of zeal differs from that of the Pharisees that compassed sea and land to make



proselytes, but who, when made, were turned to them rather than to God, I cannot understand.

It is remarkable that, notwithstanding all that has been written by the advocates of this system about a free gospel to the ungodly, they do not seem to have much to do in laboring for the conversion of men of this description. Their principal attention, like that of the Socinians, seems directed toward religious people of other denominations, and from them their forces have been mostly recruited. This may not have been universally the case, but from every thing that I have seen and heard it is very generally so: and, if this do not betray a zeal more directed to the making of proselytes to themselves than of converts to Christ, it will be difficult to determine what does.

The zeal of the apostles was directed to the correction of evils, the healing of differences, and the uniting of the friends of Jesus Christ; but the zeal produced by this system appears to be of a contrary tendency. Wherever it most prevails, we hear most of bitterness, contention, and division.

It may be said, this is no more than was true of the gospel itself, which set a man at variance with his father, his mother, and his nearest friends; and relates not to what it *causes*, but to what, through the corruptions of men, it *occasions*. The words of our Lord, however, do not describe the bitterness of believers against unbelievers, but of unbelievers against believers, who, as Cain hated his brother, hate them for the gospel's sake.

It has been said that "the poignancy of Mr. Sandeman's words arises from their being true." The same might be said, and with equal justice, of any other "bitter words," for which men of contemptuous spirits know how to "whet their tongues." If the doctrine which Mr. Sandeman taught were true, it would do good to them that

believed it. It certainly produces its own likeness in them; but what is it? Is it not "trusting in themselves that they are righteous, and despising others?" Is it not describing the mote in a brother's eye, while blinded to the beam in their own?

There is a very interesting description given in the Epistle of James of two opposite kinds of *wisdom*. The former is represented as coming "from above;" the latter as "coming *not* from above," but as being "earthly, sensual, devilish." That is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy;" this works "bitter zeal and strife in the heart." "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace," and in making peace, by the one: but by the other is produced "confusion, and every evil work." Yet these latter are supposed to "glory;" but in glorying they "lie against the truth." Without wishing to ascribe either to bodies of people indiscriminately, there is enough said to enable us to form a judgment of *things* by the effects which they produce.

To conclude.—It is no part of my design to vindicate or apologize for the errors of other denominations. The Christian church is not what it was at the beginning; and though every body of Christians is not equally corrupt, yet none is so pure but that, if its character were reported by the great Head of the church, he would have "some-what against" it. But, whatever errors or evils may be found in any of us, it is not this species of reform, even if it were universally to prevail, that would correct them. On the contrary, if we may judge from its effects during the last fifty years, it would lead the Christian world, if not to downright infidelity, yet to something that comes but very little short of it.

I am your affectionate Friend and Brother,  
ANDREW FULLER.

# MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

## REV. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

WITH EXTRACTS FROM SOME OF HIS MOST

### INTERESTING LETTERS.

COMPILED BY ANDREW FULLER, D. D.

Oh Jonathan, thou wast slain upon thy high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan !—*David*.

#### INTRODUCTION.

It was observed by this excellent man, during his last affliction, that he never till then gained any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter, by *what death* he should glorify God. To die by a consumption, had used to be an object of dread to him: But, "Oh my Lord, (said he,) if by *this death* I can most GLORIFY THEE, I prefer it to all others." The lingering death of the cross, by which our Saviour himself expired, afforded him an opportunity of uttering some of the most affecting sentences which are left on sacred record: And to the lingering death of this his honored servant, we are indebted for a considerable part of the materials which appear in these Memoirs. Had he been taken away suddenly, there had been no opportunity for him to have expressed his sentiments and feelings in the manner he has now done in letters to his friends. While in health, his hands were full of labor, and consequently his letters were written mostly upon the spur of occasion; and related principally to business, or to things which would be less interesting to Christians in general. It is true, even in them it was his manner to drop a few sentiments, towards the close, of an experimental kind; and many of these hints will be interspersed in this brief account of him: But it was during his affliction, when, being laid aside nearly a year, and obliged to desist from all public concerns, that he gave scope to the feelings of his heart. Here, standing as on an eminence, he reviewed his life, re-examined the ground of his hope, and anticipated the crown which awaited him, with a joy truly *unspeakable and full of glory*.

Like Elijah, he has left the *chariot of Israel*, and ascended as in a *chariot of fire*;

but not without having first communicated of his eminently Christian spirit. Oh that a double portion of it may rest upon us!

#### CHAPTER I.

*His Parentage, Conversion, Call to the Ministry, and Settlement at Birmingham.*

MR. SAMUEL PEARCE was born at Plymouth, on July 20th, 1766. His father, who survives him, is a respectable silversmith, and has been many years a deacon of the Baptist church in that place.

When a child, he lived with his grandfather, who was very fond of him, and endeavored to impress his mind with the principles of religion. At about eight or nine years of age, he came home to his father with a view of learning his business. As he advanced in life, his evil propensities, as he has said, began to ripen; and forming connections with several vicious school-fellows, he became more and more corrupted. So greatly was his heart, at this time, set in him to do evil, that had it not been for the restraining goodness of God, which somehow, he knew not how, preserved him in most instances from carrying his wicked inclinations into practice, he supposed he should have been utterly ruined.

At times he was under strong convictions, which rendered him miserable; but at other times they subsided; and then he would return with eagerness to his sinful pursuits. When about fifteen years old he was sent by his father to inquire after the welfare of a person in the neighborhood, in dying circumstances, who (though before his departure he was in a happy state of mind, yet) at that time was sinking into



deep despair. While in the room of the dying man, he heard him cry out with inexpressible agony of spirit, "I am damned for ever." These awful words pierced his soul; and he felt a resolution at the time to serve the Lord: but the impression soon wore off, and he again returned to folly.

When about sixteen years of age, it pleased God effectually to turn him to himself. A sermon delivered by Mr. Birt, who was then co-pastor with Mr. Gibbs, of the Baptist church at Plymouth, was the first mean of impressing his heart with a sense of his lost condition, and of directing him to the gospel remedy. The change in him appears to have been sudden, but effectual; and the recollection of his former vicious propensities, though a source of bitterness, yet furnished a strong evidence of its being the work of God. "I believe," he says, "few conversions were more joyful. The change produced in my views, feelings, and conduct, was so evident to myself, that I could no more doubt of its being from God, than of my existence. I had the witness in myself, and was filled with peace and joy unspeakable."

His feelings being naturally strong and receiving a new direction, he entered into religion with all his heart; but not having known the devices of Satan, his soul was entangled by its own ardor, and he was thrown into great perplexity. Having read Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, he determined formally to dedicate himself to the Lord, in a manner recommended in the seventeenth chapter of that work. The form of a covenant, as there drawn up, he also adopted as his own; and that he might bind himself in the most solemn and affecting manner, *signed it with his blood*. But afterwards failing in his engagements, he was plunged into dreadful perplexity, and almost into despair. On a review of his covenant, he seems to have accused himself of pharisaical reliance upon the strength of his own resolutions; and therefore, taking the paper to the top of his father's house, he tore it into small pieces, and threw it from him to be scattered by the wind. He did not however, consider his obligation to be the Lord's, as hereby nullified; but feeling more suspicion of himself, he depended upon *the blood of the cross*.

After this he was baptized, and became a member of the Baptist church at Plymouth, the ministers and members of which, in a few years, perceived in him talents for public work. Being solicited by both his pastors, he exercised as a probationer; and receiving a unanimous call from the church, entered on the work of the ministry in November, 1786. Soon after this he went to

the academy at Bristol, then under the superintendence of Dr. Caleb Evans.

Mr. Birt, now pastor of the Baptist church in the square, Plymouth Dock, in a letter to the Compiler of these Memoirs, thus speaks of him: "Though he was, so far as I know, the very first fruits of my ministry, on my coming hither, and though our friendship and affection for each other were great and constant, yet previous to his going to Bristol I had but few opportunities of conversing with him, or of making particular observations on him. All who best knew him, however, will remember, and must tenderly speak of his loving deportment; and those who attended the conferences with him soon received the most impressive intimations of his future eminence as a minister of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Very few," adds Mr. Birt, "have entered upon, and gone through their religious profession with more exalted piety, or warmer zeal, than Samuel Pearce; and as few have exceeded him in the possession and display of that *charity* which 'suffereth long, and is kind, that envieth not, that vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up, that doth not behave itself unseemly, that seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, that beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.' But why should I say this to you? You knew him yourself."

While at the academy he was much distinguished by the amiableness of his spirit and behavior. It is sometimes observable that where the talents of a young man are admired by his friends, and his early efforts flattered by crowded auditories, effects have been produced which have proved fatal to his future respectability and usefulness. But this was not the case with Mr. Pearce. Amidst the tide of popularity, which even at that early period attended his ministerial exercises, his tutors have more than once remarked that he never appeared to them to be in the least elated, or to have neglected his proper studies; but was uniformly the serious, industrious, docile, modest, and unassuming young man.

Towards the latter end of 1789, he came to the church in Cannon street, Birmingham, to whom he was recommended by Mr. Hall, now of Cambridge, at that time one of his tutors. After preaching to them awhile on approbation, he was chosen to be their pastor. His ordination was in August, 1790. Dr. Evans gave the charge, and the late Mr. Robert Hall of Arnsby, delivered an address to the church on the occasion. In the year 1791, he married Miss Sarah Hopkins, daughter of Mr. Joshua Hopkins of Alcester: a connection which appears to have been all along a source of

great enjoyment to him. The following lines addressed to Mrs. Pearce when he was on a journey, a little more than a year after their marriage, seem to be no more than a common letter; yet they show, not only the tenderness of his affection, but his heavenly mindedness, his gentle manner of persuading, and how every argument was fetched from religion, and every incident improved for introducing it:

"*Chipping Norton, August 15, 1792.*

"I believe on retrospection, that I have hitherto anticipated the proposed time of my return, rather than delayed the interview with my dear Sarah for an hour. But what shall I say my love now, to reconcile you to my procrastinating my return for several days more? Why, I will say, it appears I am called of God; and I trust the piety of both of us will submit and say, *Thy will be done.*

"You have no doubt perused Mr. Ryland's letter to me, wherein I find he solicits an exchange. The reason he assigns is so obviously important, that a much greater sacrifice than we are called to make, should not be withheld to accomplish it. I therefore propose, God willing, to spend the next Lord's day at Northampton. I thought of taking tea with you this evening: *that* would have been highly gratifying to us both; but it must be our meat and drink to do and submit to the will of our heavenly Father. All is good that comes from him, and all is done right which is done in obedience to him. Oh to be perfectly resigned to his disposal—how good is it! May you, my dearest Sarah, and myself, daily prove the sweetness of this pious frame of soul: then all our duties will be sweet, all our trials will be light, all our pleasures will be pure, and all our hopes sanctified.

"This evening I hope to be at Northampton. Let your prayers assist my efforts on the ensuing Sabbath. You will, I trust, find in Mr. R. a ship richly laden with spiritual treasures. Oh for more supplies from the exhaustless mines of grace! S. P."

The soul of Mr. Pearce was formed for friendship: It was natural, therefore, to suppose, that while engaging in the pursuit of his studies at the academy, he would contract religious intimacies with some of his brethren; and it is worthy of notice, that the grand cement of his friendship was *kindred piety*. In the following letters, addressed to his friend, Mr. Steadman, the reader will perceive the justness of this remark, as well as the encouraging prospects which soon attended his labors at Birmingham:

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER, *May 9, 1792.*

"You live so remote that I can hear

nothing of your prosperity at Broughton. I hope you are settled with a comfortable people, and that you enjoy much of your Master's presence, both in the study and the pulpit. For my part, I have nothing to lament but an insensible, ungrateful heart, and that is sufficient cause for lamentation. This, only this, bows me down; and under this pressure I am ready to adopt the words I preached from last evening: *Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest!*

"As a people we are generally united; I believe more so than most churches of the same dimensions. Our number of members is about two hundred and ninety-five, between forty and fifty of whom have joined us since I saw you, and most of them I have the happiness of considering as my children in the faith. There is still a crying out amongst us after salvation; and still, through much grace, it is my happiness to point them to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

"In preaching, I have often peculiar liberty; at other times barren. I suppose my experience is like that of most of my brethren: but I am not weary of my work. I hope still that I am willing to spend and be spent, so that I may win souls to Christ, and finish my course with joy; but I want more heart religion: I want a more habitual sense of the divine presence; I want to walk with God as Enoch walked. There is nothing that grieves me so much, or brings so much darkness on my soul, as my little spirituality, and frequent wanderings in secret prayer. I cannot neglect the duty; but it is seldom that I enjoy it.

"Ye that love the Lord indeed,  
Tell me is it so with you?"

When I come to the house of God, I pray and preach with freedom. Then I think the presence of the people seems to weigh more with me than the presence of God, and deem myself a hypocrite, almost ready to leave my pulpit, for some more pious preacher. But the Lord does own the word; and again I say, if I go to hell myself, I will do what I can to keep others from going thither; and so in the strength of the Lord I will.

"An observation once made to me helps to support me above water: 'If you did not plough in your closet, you would not reap in the pulpit.' And again I think the Lord *dwelleth in Zion*, and loveth it more than the dwellings of Jacob. S. P."

"*February 1, 1793.*

"The pleasure which your friendly epistle gave me, rises beyond expression; and it is one of the first wishes of my heart ever to live in your valued friendship. Accept this, and my former letters, my dear



brother, as sufficient evidences of my ardent wishes to preserve by correspondence, that mutual remembrance of each other, which on my part will ever be pleasurable, and on yours, I hope, never painful.

"But ah, how soon may we be rendered incapable of such an intercourse! When I left Bristol, I left it with regret. I was sorry to leave my studies to embark (inexperienced as I am) on the tempestuous ocean of public life, where the high blowing winds, and rude and noisy billows, must more or less inevitably annoy the trembling voyager. Nor did it make a small addition to my pain, that I was to part with so many of my dear companions, with whom I had spent so many happy hours, either in furnishing or unburthening the mind. I need not say, among the first of these I considered Josiah Evans. But ah, my friend, we shall see his face no more! Through divine grace I hope we shall go to him, but he will not return to us. 'He wasted away, he gave up the ghost, and where is he?' I was prepared for the news because I expected it. The last time I heard directly from him, was by a very serious and affectionate letter, which I received, I think, last September. To it I replied; but received no answer. I conjectured, I feared; and now my conjectures and fears are all realized. Dear departed youth! thy memory will ever be grateful to this affectionate breast. May thy amiable qualities live again in thy surviving friend, that to the latest period of his life he may thank God for the friendship of Josiah Evans.

"I assure you, my dear Steadman, I feel, keenly feel the force of the sentiment, which Blair thus elegantly expresses:

'Of joys departed ne'er to be recall'd,  
How painful the remembrance!'

"But I sorrow not as one without hope. I have a two-fold hope: I hope he is now among the spirits of the just made perfect, and that he will be of the blessed and holy number who have part in the first resurrection: and I hope also, through the same rich, free, sovereign, almighty, matchless grace, to join the number too. Pleasing thought! Unite to divide no more!

"I preached last night from Rev. xxi. 6: 'I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.' I took occasion to expound the former part of the chapter, and found therein a pleasure inexpressible; especially when speaking from the first verse, 'And there was no more sea.' The first idea which presented itself to me was this—*there shall be no bar to intercourse*. Whether the thought be just or not, I leave with you and my hearers to determine: but I found happy liberty in illustrating it. What is it that separates one

nation, and one part of the globe from another? Is it not the sea? Are not Christians, though all of one family, the common father of which is God, separated by this sea, or that river, or the other stream below? Yes; but they are one family still. *There shall be none of these obstructions to communion, of these bars to intercourse; nothing to divide their affections or disunite their praise for ever.* Forgive my freedoms, I am writing to a friend, to a brother. S. P."

There are few, if any, thinking men, but who at some seasons have had their minds perplexed with regard to religious principles, even those which are of the greatest importance. In the end, however, where the heart is right, they commonly issue in a more decided attachment to the truth. Thus it was with Mr. Pearce. In another part of the above letter, he thus writes to his friend Steadman: "I have since I saw you, been much perplexed about some doctrinal points, both Arminian and Socinian, I believe through reading very attentively, but without sufficient dependence on the Spirit of truth, several controversies on those subjects; particularly the writings of Whitby, Priestly, and others. Indeed, had the state of mind I was in about ten weeks since continued, I should have been incapable of preaching with comfort at all. But in the mount of the Lord will he be seen. Just as I thought of giving up, he who hath the hearts of all men in his hand, and turneth them as the rivers of water are turned, was pleased, by a merciful though afflicting providence, to set me at a happy liberty.

I was violently seized with a disorder very rare here, and which carried off many, supposed to be an inflammation in the bowels. One Sabbath evening I felt such alarming symptoms that I did not expect to see the Monday morning. In these circumstances I realized the feelings of a dying man. My mind had been so accustomed to reflect on virtue and moral goodness that, the first thing I attempted, was a survey of my own conduct; my diligence and faithfulness in the ministry, my unspotted life, &c., &c. But ah! vain props these for dying men to rest on! Such heart sins, such corruptions and evil propensities recurred to my mind, that if ever I knew the moment when I felt my own righteousness to be like loathsome and filthy rags, it was then. And where should I, where could I, where did I flee, but to Him whose glory and grace I had been of late degrading, at least in my thoughts? Yes, there I saw peace, for guilty consciences was to be *alone* obtained through an almighty Saviour. And O! wonderful to tell, I again came to him; nor was I sent away without the bles-

sing. I found him full of all compassion, ready to receive the most ungrateful of men.

'O! to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be.'

Thus, my dear brother, was the snare broken, and thus I escaped.

" 'A debtor to mercy alone,  
Of covenant mercy I sing.'

Join with me in praising Him, who remembered me in my low estate, because his mercy endureth forever. Yet this is among the *all things*. I have found it has made me more spiritual in preaching. I have prized the gospel more than ever, and hope it will be the means of guarding me against future temptations. Your brother, with ardent affection, in the dear Lord Jesus.

"S. P."

From his first coming to Birmingham, his meekness and patience were put to the trial by an Antinomian spirit which infected many individuals, both in and out of his congregation. It is well known with what affection it was his practice to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, and to exhort Christians to the exercise of practical godliness: but these were things which they could not endure. Soothing doctrine was all they desired. Therefore it was, that his ministry was traduced by them as Arminian, and treated with neglect and contempt. But, like his divine master, he bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and this while he had the strongest satisfaction that in those very things to which they objected, he was pleasing God. And though he plainly perceived the pernicious influence of their principles upon their own minds, as well as the minds of others, yet he treated them with great gentleness and long forbearance; and when it became necessary to exclude such of this description as were in communion with him, it was with the greatest reluctance that he came into that measure, and not without having first tried all other means in vain. He was not apt to deal in harsh language; yet in one of his letters about that time, he speaks of the principles and spirit of these people as a "cursed leaven."

Among his numerous religious friendships, he seems to have formed one for the special purpose of *spiritual improvement*. This was with Mr. Summers of London, who often accompanied him in his journeys; to whom, therefore, it might be expected he would open his heart without reserve. Here, it is true, we sometimes see him, like his brethren, groaning under darkness, want of spirituality and the remains of indwelling sin; but frequently rising above all, as into his native element, and pouring

forth his ardent soul in expressions of joy and praise. On Aug. 19, 1793, he writes thus:

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"When I take my pen to pursue my correspondence with *you*, I have no concern but to communicate something which may answer the same end we propose in our annual journeys: viz. lending some assistance in the important object of *getting, and keeping nearer to God*. This I am persuaded is the mark at which we should be continually aiming, nor rest satisfied until we attain that to which we aspire. I am really ashamed of myself, when on the one hand, I review the time that has elapsed since I first assumed the Christian name, with the opportunities in godliness which have crowded on my moments since that period; and when on the other, I *feel* the little advance I have made! *More light*, to be sure, I have; but light without *heat* leaves the Christian half dissatisfied. Yesterday I preached on the duty of engagedness in God's service, from Jer. xxx. 21, 'Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.' (A text for which I am indebted to our last journey. While urging the necessity of *heart* religion, including sincerity and ardor, I found myself much assisted by reflecting on the, ardor which our dear Redeemer discovered in the cause of sinners. 'Ah,' I could not help saying, 'if our Saviour had measured his intenseness in his engagements for us by our fervency in fulfilling our engagements to him, we should have been now farther from hope than we are from perfection.'

" 'Dear Lord, the ardor of *thy* love  
Reproves my cold returns.'

"Two things are causes of daily astonishment to me; the readiness of Christ to come from heaven to earth for me; and my backwardness to rise from earth to heaven with him. But oh how animating the prospect! A time approaches when we shall rise to sink no more: to 'be for ever with the Lord.' To be *with the Lord* for a week, for a day, for an hour; how sweetly must the moments pass! But to be *for ever* with the Lord; that instamps salvation with perfection; that gives an energy to our hopes, and a dignity to our joy, so as to render it 'unspeakable and full of glory!' I have had a few realizing moments since we parted, and the effect has been, I trust, a broken heart. O, my brother, it is desirable to have a broken heart, were it only for the sake of the pleasure it feels in being helped and healed by Jesus! Heart affecting views of the cursed effects of sin are highly salutary to a Christian's growth in humili-



ty, confidence, and gratitude. At once how abasing and exalting is the comparison of our loathsome hearts with that of the lovely Saviour! In him we see all that can charm an angel's heart; in *ourselves*, all that can gratify a devil's. And yet we may rest perfectly assured that these nests of iniquity shall ere long be transformed into the temple of God; and these sighs of sorrow be exchanged for songs of praise.

"Last Lord's day I spent the most profitable Sabbath to myself that I ever remember since I have been in the ministry; and to this hour I feel the sweet solemnities of that day delightfully protracted. Ah, my brother, were it not for past experience, I should say,

'My heart presumes I cannot lose  
The relish all my days.'

But now I rejoice with trembling; desiring to 'hold fast what I have, that no man take my crown.' Yet fearing that I shall find how

—'Ere one fleeting hour is past,  
The flatt'ring world employs  
Some sensual bait to seize my taste,  
And to pollute my joys.'

Yours, in our dear Saviour, S. P."

In April, 1794, dropping a few lines to the Compiler of these Memoirs, on Lord's day evening, he thus concludes: "We have had a good day. I find, as a dear friend once said, *It is pleasant speaking for God when we walk with him.* Oh for much of Enoch's spirit! The Head of the church grant it to my dear brother, and his affectionate friend, S. P."

In another letter to Mr. Summers, dated June 24, 1794, he thus writes: "We, my friend, have entered on a correspondence of heart with heart, and must not lose sight of that avowed object. I thank you sincerely for continuing the remembrance of so unworthy a creature in your intercourse with Heaven; and I thank that sacred Spirit, whose quickening influences you say you enjoy in the exercise. Yes, my brother, I have reaped the fruits of your supplications. I have been indulged with some seasons of unusual joy, tranquil as solitude, and solid as the rock on which our hopes are built. In public exercises, peculiar assistance has been afforded; especially in these three things—the exaltation of the Redeemer's glory; the detection of the crooked ways, false refuges, and self-delusions of the human heart; and the stirring up of the saints to press onward, making God's cause their own, and considering themselves as living not for themselves, but for *him* alone.

"Nor hath the word been without its ef-

fect; above fifty have been added to our church this year, most of whom I rejoice in, as the seals of my ministry in the Lord. Indeed I am surrounded with goodness; and scarce a day passes over my head, but I say, were it not for an *ungrateful heart* I should be the happiest man alive; and *that* excepted, I neither expect nor wish to be happier in this world. My wife, my children, and myself are uninterruptedly healthy; my friends kind; my soul at rest; my labors successful, &c. Who should be content and thankful, if I should not? Oh, my brother, help me to praise! S. P."

In a letter to Mrs. Pearce, from Plymouth, dated Sept. 2, 1794, the dark side of the cloud seems towards him: "I have felt much barrenness, says he, as to spiritual things, since I have been here, compared with my usual frame at home; and it is a poor exchange to enjoy the creature at the expense of the Creator's presence: a few seasons of spirituality I have enjoyed; but my heart, my inconstant heart, is too prone to rove from its proper centre. Pray for me, my dear, my dearest friend! I do for you daily. Oh wrestle for me, that I may have more of Enoch's spirit! I am fully persuaded that a Christian is no longer really happy, and inwardly satisfied, than whilst he walks with God; and I would this moment rejoice to abandon every pleasure here for a closer walk with him. I cannot, amidst all the round of social pleasure, amidst the most inviting scenes of nature, *feel* that peace with God which passeth understanding. My thirst for preaching Christ, I fear, abates, and a detestable vanity for the reputation of a 'good preacher' (as the world terms it) has already cost me many conflicts. Daily I feel convinced of the propriety of a remark which my friend Summers made on his journey to Wales, that 'It is easier for a Christian to walk habitually near to God, than to be irregular in our walk with him.' But I want resolution; I want a contempt for the world; I want more heavenly-mindedness; I want more humility; I want much, very much of that, which God alone can bestow. Lord, help the weakest lamb in all thy flock!

"I preached this evening from Cant. ii. 3: 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' But how little love for my Saviour did I feel! with what little affection and zeal did I speak! I am, by some, praised; I am followed by many; I am respected by most of my acquaintances; but all this is nothing, yea, less than nothing, compared with possessing 'this testimony, *that I please God.* Oh thou friend of sinners, humble me by repentance, and melt me down with love!

"To-morrow morning I set off for Laur-

ceston. I write to-night, lest my stay in Cornwall might make my delay appear tedious to the dear and deserving object of my most undissembled love. Oh, my Sarah, had I as much proof that I loved *Jesus Christ* as I have of my love to *you*, I should prize it more than rubies! As often as you can find an hour for correspondence, think of your more than ever affectionate.

"S. P."

In another to Mr. Summers, dated Nov. 10, 1794, he says: "I suppose I shall visit London in the spring. Prepare my way by communion both with God and man. I hope your soul prospers. I have enjoyed more of God within this month than ever since the day of my espousals with him. Oh, my brother, help me to praise! I cannot say that I am quite so exalted in my frame to-day; yet still I acknowledge what I have lived upon for weeks. That were there no being or thing in the universe, beside God and me, I should be at no loss for happiness. Oh,

'Tis heaven to rest in his embrace  
And no where else but there."

"S. P."

## CHAPTER II.

*His laborious exertions in promoting Missions to the Heathen, and offering himself to become a Missionary.*

MR. PEARCE has been uniformly the spiritual and the active servant of Christ; but neither his spirituality nor his activity would have appeared in the manner they have, but for his engagements in the *introduction of the gospel among the heathen*.

It was not long after his settlement at Birmingham, that he became acquainted with Mr. Carey, in whom he found a soul nearly akin to his own. When the brethren in the counties of Northampton and Leicester formed themselves into a Missionary Society at Kettering, in Oct. 1792, he was there, and entered into the business with all his heart. On his return to Birmingham, he communicated the subject to his congregation with so much effect, that to the small sum of £13 2s. 3d., with which the subscription was begun, was added £70, which was collected and transmitted to the treasurer; and the leading members of the church formed themselves into an Assistant Society. Early in the following spring, when it was resolved that our brethren, Thomas and Carey, should go on a mission to the Hindoos, and a considerable sum of money was wanted for the purpose, he labored with increasing ardor in various parts of the kingdom; and when the object was

accomplished, he rejoiced in all his labor, smiling in every company, and blessing God.

During his labors and journeys, on this important object, he wrote several letters to his friends, an extract or two from which, will discover the state of his mind at this period, as well as the encouragements that he met with in his work at home:

TO MR. STEDMAN.

"Birmingham, February 8, 1793.

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

"Union of sentiment often creates friendship among carnal men, and similarity of feeling never fails to produce affection among pious men, as far as that similarity is known. I have loved you ever since I knew you. We saw, we felt alike in the interesting concerns of personal religion. We formed a reciprocal attachment. We expressed it by words. We agreed to do so by correspondence; and we have not altogether been wanting to our engagements. But our correspondence has been interrupted, not, I believe, through any diminution of regard on either side: I am persuaded not on mine. I rather condemn myself as the first aggressor; but I excuse while I condemn, and so would you, did you know half the concerns which devolve upon me in my present situation. Birmingham is a central place; the inhabitants are numerous; our members are between three and four hundred. The word preached has lately been remarkably blessed. In less than five months I baptized nearly forty persons, almost all newly awakened. Next Lord's day week I expect to add to their number. These persons came to my house to propose the most important of all inquiries: What must we do to be saved? I have been thus engaged some weeks during the greatest part of most days. This with four sermons a week, will account for my neglect. But your letter, received this evening, calls forth every latent affection of my heart for you. We are, my dear brother, not only united in the common object of pursuit—*Salvation*; not only rest our hopes on the same foundation—*Jesus Christ*; but we feel alike respecting the poor heathens! Oh, how Christianity expresses the mind! What tenderness for our poor fellow sinners! What sympathy for their moral misery! What desires to do them everlasting good doth it provoke! How satisfying to our judgments is this evidence of grace! How gratifying to our present taste are these benevolent breathings! Oh, how I love that man whose soul is deeply affected with the importance of the precious gospel to idolatrous heathens! Excellently, my dear brother you observe, that, great as its bless-



ings are in the estimation of a sinner called in a Christian country, inexpressibly greater must they shine on the newly illuminated mind of a converted pagan.

"We shall be glad of all your assistance in a pecuniary way, as the expense will be heavy. Dear brother Carey has paid us a visit of love this week. He preached excellently to-night. I expect brother Thomas next week or the week after. I wish you would meet him here. I have a house at your command, and a heart greatly attached to you. S. P."

#### TO MR. FULLER.

"February 23, 1793.

"I am willing to go any where, and do any thing in my power; but I hope no plan will be suffered to interfere with the affecting, hoped for, dreaded day, March 13, (the day of our brethren, Carey and Thomas's solemn designation at Leicester.) Oh, how the anticipation of it at once rejoices and afflicts me. Our hearts need steeling to part with our much-loved brethren, who are about to venture their all for the name of the Lord Jesus. I feel my soul melting within me when I read the twentieth chapter of the Acts, and especially verses 36—38. But why grieve? We shall see them again: Oh, yes: them, and the children whom the Lord will give them; we, and the children whom the Lord hath given us. We shall meet again: not to weep and pray, but to smile and praise. S. P."

From the day of the departure of the Missionaries, no one was more importunate in prayer than Mr. Pearce; and on the news of their safe arrival, no one was more filled with joy and thankfulness.

Hitherto we had witnessed his zeal in promoting this important undertaking *at home*; but this did not satisfy him. In October, 1794, we were given to understand that he had for some time had it in serious contemplation to go himself, and to cast in his lot with his brethren in India. When his designs were first discovered, his friends and connections were much concerned about it, and endeavored to persuade him that he was already in a sphere of usefulness too important to be relinquished. But his answer was, that they were too interested in the affair to be competent judges, and nothing would satisfy him short of his making a formal offer of his services to the committee: nor could he be happy for *them* to decide upon it, without their appointing a day of solemn prayer for the purpose, and when assembled, hearing an account of the principal exercises of his mind upon the subject, with the reasons which induced him

to make the proposal, as well as the reasons alleged by his connections against it.

On Oct. 4, 1794, he wrote to an intimate friend, of whom he entertained a hope that he might accompany him, as follows:

"Last Wednesday I rode to Northampton, where a ministers' meeting was held on the following day. We talked much about the mission. We read some fresh and very encouraging accounts. We lamented that we could obtain no suitable persons to send out to the assistance of our brethren. Now what do you think was said at this meeting? My dear brother, do not be surprised that *all* present united in opinion, that in all our connection there was no man known to us so suitable as *you*, provided you were disposed for it, and things could be brought to bear. I thought it right to mention this circumstance; and one thing more I cannot refrain from saying, that were it manifestly the will of God, I should call that the happiest hour of my life, which witnessed our *both* embarking with our families on board one ship, as helpers of the servants of Jesus Christ already in Hindostan. Yes, I could unreluctantly leave Europe and all its contents for the pleasures and perils of this glorious service. Often my heart in the sincerest ardors thus breathes forth its desires unto God: 'Here am I, send me!' But I am ignorant whether you from experience can realize my feelings. Perhaps you have friendship enough for me to lay open your meditations on this subject in your next. If you have had half the exercises that I have, it will be a relief to your laboring mind: or, if you think I have made too free with you, reprove me, and I will love you still. O if I could find a heart that had been tortured and ravished like my own in this respect, I should form a new kind of alliance, and feel a friendship of a novel species. With eagerness should I communicate all the vicissitudes of my sensations, and with eagerness listen to a recital of kindred feelings. With impatience I should seek, and with gratitude receive direction and support, and, I hope, feel a new occasion of thankfulness, when I bow my knee to the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Whence is it that I thus write to *you*, as I have never written to any one before? Is there a fellowship of the Spirit; or is it the confidence that I have in your friendship that thus directs my pen? Tell me dear —, tell me how you have felt, and how you still feel on this interesting subject, and do not long delay the gratification to your very affectionate friend and brother. S. P."

About a month preceding the decision of this affair, he drew up a *narrative* of his

experience respecting it; resolving at the same time to set apart one day in every week for secret fasting and prayer to God for direction; and to keep a *diary* of the exercises of his mind during the month.

When the committee were met at Northampton according to his desire, he presented to them the narrative; and which was as follows:

"October 8, 1794. Having had some peculiar exercises of mind relative to my personally attempting to labor for the dear Redeemer amongst the *heathen*; and being at a loss to know what is the will of the Lord in this matter respecting me, I have thought that I might gain some satisfaction by adopting these two resolutions; First, That I will as in the presence of God, faithfully endeavor to recollect the various workings of my mind on this subject, from the first period of my feeling any desire of this nature until now, and commit them to writing; together with what considerations do now, on the one hand, impel me to the work, and on the other, what prevent me from immediately resolving to enter upon it. Secondly, That I will from this day keep a regular journal, with special relation to this matter.

"This account and journal will, I hope, furnish me with much assistance, in forming a future opinion of the path of duty; as well as help any friends whom I may hereafter think proper to consult, to give me suitable advice in the business. Lord, help me!"

"It is very common for young converts to feel strong desires for the conversion of others. These desires immediately followed the evidences of my own religion: and I remember well they were particularly fixed upon the poor heathens. I believe the first week that I knew the grace of God in truth, I put up many fervent cries to Heaven in their behalf; and at the same time felt a strong desire to be employed in promoting their salvation. It was not long after, that the first settlers sailed for Botany Bay. I longed to go with them although in company with the convicts, in hopes of making known the blessings of the great salvation in New Zealand. I actually had thought of making an effort to go out unknown to my friends; but ignorant how to proceed, I abandoned my purpose. Nevertheless, I could not help talking about it: and at one time a report was circulated that I was really going; and a neighboring minister very seriously conversed with me upon the subject.

"While I was at the Bristol Academy, the desire remained; but not with that energy as at first, except on one or two occasions. Being sent by my tutor to preach

two Sabbaths at Coldford, I felt particular sweetness in devoting the evenings of the week to going from house to house among the colliers, who dwell in the *Forest of Deane*, adjoining the town, conversing and praying with them, and preaching to them. In these exercises I found the most solid satisfaction that I have ever known in discharging the duties of my calling. In a poor hut, with a stone to stand upon, and a three-legged stool for my desk, surrounded with thirty or forty of the smutty neighbors, I have felt such an unction from above, that my whole auditory have been melted into tears, whilst directed to 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world;' and I, weeping among them, could scarcely speak, or they hear, for interrupting sighs and sobs. Many a time did I then think, Thus it was with the apostles of our Lord, when they went from house to house among the poor heathen. In work like this, I could live and die. Indeed, had I at that time been at liberty to settle, I should have preferred that situation to any in the kingdom with which I was then acquainted.

"But the Lord placed me in a situation very different. He brought me to Birmingham; and here, among the novelties, cares, and duties of my station, I do not remember any wish for foreign service, till after a residence of some months I heard Dr. Coke preach at one of Mr. Wesley's chapels, from Psalm lxviii. 31. 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.' Then it was, that in Mr. Horne's phrase, 'I felt a passion for missions.' Then I felt an interest in the state of the heathen world far more deep and permanent than before, and seriously thought how I could best promote their obtaining the knowledge of the crucified Jesus.

"As no way at that time was open, I cannot say that I thought of taking a part of the good work among the heathen abroad; but resolved that I would render them all the assistance I could at home." My mind was employed during the residue of that week in meditating on Psalm lxvii. 3, 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God;' and the next Sabbath morning I spoke from those words. On the promised increase of the church of God. I had observed that our monthly meetings for prayer had been better attended than the other prayer meetings, from the time that I first knew the people in Cannon street: but I thought a more general attention to them was desirable. I therefore preached on the Sabbath-day evening preceeding the next monthly prayer-meeting, from Matt. vi. 10, 'Thy kingdom come;' and urged with ardor and affection a universal union of the serious part of the congregation in this ex-



ercise. It rejoiced me to see three times as many the next night as usual; and for some time after that, I had nearly equal cause for joy.

"As to my own part, I continued to preach much upon the promises of God respecting the conversion of the heathen nations; and by so doing, and always communicating to my people every piece of information I could obtain respecting the present state of missions, they soon imbibed the same spirit: and from that time to this they have discovered so much concern for the more extensive spread of the gospel, that at our monthly prayer-meetings both stated and occasional, I should be as much surprised at the case of the heathen being omitted in any prayer, as at an omission of the name and merits of Jesus.

"Indeed it has been a frequent mean of enkindling my languid devotion, in my private, domestic, and public engagements in prayer. When I have been barren in petitioning for myself, and other things, often have I been sweetly enlarged when I came to notice the situation of those who were perishing for lack of knowledge.

"Thus I went on praying, and preaching, and conversing on the subject, till the time of brother Carey's ordination at Leicester, May 24, 1791. On the evening of that day, he read to the ministers a great part of his manuscript, since published; entitled, *An Inquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. This added fresh fuel to my zeal. But to pray and preach on the subject, was all I could then think of doing. But when I heard of a proposed meeting at Kettering, Oct. 2, 1792, for the express purpose of considering our duty in regard to the heathens, I could not resist my inclination for going; although at that time I was not much acquainted with the ministers of the Northamptonshire association. There I got my judgment informed, and my heart increasingly interested. I returned home resolved to lay myself out in the cause. The public steps I have taken are too well known to need repeating; but my mind became now inclined to go among the heathen myself. Yet a consideration of my connections with the dear people of God in Birmingham, restrained my desires, and kept me from naming my wishes to any body, (as I remember) except to brother Carey. With him I was pretty free. We had an interesting conversation about it just before he left Europe. I shall never forget the manner of his saying, 'Well, you will come after us.' My heart said, Amen! and my eagerness for the work increased; though I never talked freely about it, except to my wife, and we both then thought that my relation to the church in Cannon street, and usefulness

there, forbade any such an attempt. However I have made it a constant matter of prayer, often begging of God, as I did when first I was disposed for the work of the ministry, either that he would take away the desire, or open a door for its fulfilment. And the result has uniformly been, that the more spiritual I have been in the frame of my mind, the more love I have felt for God; and the more communion I have enjoyed with him, so much the more disposed have I been to engage as a missionary among the heathen.

"Until the accounts came of our brethren's entrance on the work in India, my connections in Europe pretty nearly balanced my desire for going abroad; and though I felt quite devoted to the Lord's will and work, yet I thought the scale rather preponderated on the side of my abiding in my present situation.

"But since our brethren's letters have informed us that there is such prospects of usefulness in Hindostan; that priests and people are ready to hear the word; and that preachers are a thousand times more wanted, than people to preach to, my heart has been more deeply affected than ever with their condition; and my desires for a participation of the toils and pleasures, crosses and comforts of which they are the subjects are advanced to an anxiety which nothing can remove, and time seems to increase.

"It has pleased God also lately to teach me more than ever, that *himself* is the fountain of happiness; that likeness to him, friendship for him, and communion with him, form the basis of all true enjoyment; and that this can be attained as well in an eastern jungle, among Hindoos and Moors, as in the most polished parts of Europe. The very *disposition*, which, blessed be my dear Redeemer! he has given me, to be any thing, do any thing, or endure any thing, so that his name might be glorified—I say, the *disposition* itself is heaven begun below. I do feel a daily panting after more devotedness to his service, and I can never think of my suffering Lord, without dissolving into love; love which constrains me to glorify him with my body and spirit, which are his.

"I do often represent to myself all the possible hardships of a mission, arising from my own heart, the nature of the country, domestic connections, disappointment in my hopes, &c. &c. And then I set over against them all, these two thoughts: *I am God's servant and God is my friend*. In this, I anticipate happiness in the midst of suffering, light in darkness, and life in death. Yea, I do not count my life dear unto myself, so that I may win some poor heathens unto Christ; and I am willing to be offered

as a sacrifice on the service of the faith of the gospel.

"Mr. Horne justly observes, 'that, in order to justify a man's undertaking the work of a missionary, he should be qualified for it, disposed heartily to enter upon it, and free from such ties as exclude an engagement.' As to the first, others must judge for me; but they must not be men who have an interest in keeping me at home. I shall rejoice in opportunities of attaining to an acquaintance with the ideas of judicious and impartial men in this matter, and with them I must leave it. A willingness to embark in this cause I do possess: and I can hardly persuade myself that God has for ten years inclined my heart to this work without having any thing for me to do in it. But the third thing requires more consideration; and here alone I hesitate." Here he goes on to state all the objections from this quarter, with his answers to them, leaving it with his brethren to decide when they had heard the whole.

The committee, after the most serious and mature deliberation, though they were fully satisfied as to brother Pearce's qualifications, and greatly approved of his spirit, yet were unanimously of opinion *that he ought not to go*; and that not merely on account of his connections at home, which might have been pleaded in the case of brother Carey, but on account of the mission itself, which required his assistance in the station which he already occupied.

In this opinion brother Carey himself, with singular disinterestedness of mind, afterwards concurred; and wrote to brother Pearce to the same effect.

On receiving the opinion of the committee, he immediately wrote to Mrs. P. as follows:

"Northampton Nov. 13, 1794.

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I am disappointed, but not dismayed. I ever wish to make my Saviour's will my own. I am more satisfied than ever I expected I should be with a negative upon my earnest desires, because the business has been so conducted, that I think, (if by any means such an issue could be insured) the mind of Christ has been obtained. My dear brethren here have treated the affair with as much seriousness and affection as I could possibly desire, and, I think, more than so insignificant a worm could expect. After we had spent the former part of this day in fasting and prayer, with conversation on the subject, till near two o'clock, brother Potts, King, and I retired. We prayed while the committee consulted. The case seemed difficult, and I suppose they were nearly two hours in deciding. At last, time forced them to a point; and their answer I

inclose for your satisfaction. Pray take care of it; it will serve for me to refer to when my mind may labor beneath a burden of guilt another day.

"I am my dear Sarah's own S. P."

The decision of the committee, though it rendered him much more reconciled to abide in his native country than he could have been without it; yet did not in the least abate his zeal for the object. As he could not promote it abroad, he seemed resolved to lay himself out more for it at home. In March, 1795, after a dangerous illness, he says, in a letter to Mr. Fuller, "Through mercy I am almost in a state of convalescence. May my spared life be wholly devoted to the service of my dear Redeemer. I do not care where I am, whether in England or in India, so I am employed as he would have me; but surely we need pray hard that God would send some more help to Hindostan."

In January, 1796, when he was first informed by the Secretary, of a young man, (Mr. Fountain) being desirous of going, of the character that was given of him by our friend Mr. Savage, of London, and of a committee meeting being in contemplation, he wrote thus in answer: "Your letter, just arrived, put—I was going to say, another soul into my little body: at least it has added new life to the soul I have. I cannot be contented with the thought of being absent from your proposed meeting. No, no; I must be there, (for my own sake I mean) and try to sing with you, 'O'er the gloomy hills of darkness.'"<sup>\*</sup>

In August, the same year, having received a letter from India, he wrote to Mr. Fuller as follows "Brother Carey speaks in such a manner of the effects of the gospel in his neighborhood, as in my view promises a fair illustration of our Lord's parable, when he compared the kingdom of heaven to a little leaven, hid in three measures of meal, which insinuated itself so effectually as to leaven the lump at last. Blessed be God, the leaven is already in the meal. The fermentation is begun; and my hopes were never half so strong as they are now, that the whole shall be effectually leavened. *O that I were there to witness the delightful progress!* But whither am I running? . . . *I long to write to you from Hindostan!*"

On receiving other letters from India, in January, 1797, he thus writes: "Perhaps you are now rejoicing in spirit with me over fresh intelligence from Bengal. This moment have I concluded reading two letters from brother Thomas: one to the Society, and the other to myself. He speaks

<sup>\*</sup> The 428 Hymn of Dr. Rippon's Selection, frequently sung at our committee meetings.



of others from brother Carey. I hope they are already in your possession. If his correspondence has produced the same effects on your heart as brother Thomas's has on mine, you are filled with gladness and hope. I am grieved that I cannot convey them to you immediately. I long to witness the pleasure their contents will impart to all whose hearts are with us. O that I were accounted worthy of the Lord to preach the gospel to the Booteas !"

Being detained from one of our mission meetings by preparing the Periodical Accounts for the press, he soon after wrote as follows: "We shall now get out No. IV. very soon. I hope it will go to the press in a very few days. Did you notice, that the very day on which we invited all our friends to a day of prayer on behalf of the mission, (Dec. 28, 1796) was the same in which brother Carey sent his best and most interesting accounts to the Society? I hope you had solemn and sweet seasons at Northampton. On many accounts I should have rejoiced to have been with you: yet I am satisfied that on the whole I was doing best at home." It has been already observed that for a month preceding the decision of the committee, he resolved to devote one day in every week to secret prayer and fasting, and to keep a diary of the exercises of his mind during the whole of that period. This diary was not shown to the committee at that time, but merely the preceding narrative. Since his death a few of them have perused it; and have been almost ready to think, that if they had seen it before, they dared not oppose his going. But the Lord hath taken him to himself. It no longer remains a question now, whether he shall labor in England or in India. A few passages, however, from this transcript of his heart, while contemplating a great and disinterested undertaking, will furnish a better idea of his character than could be given by any other hand.

"Oct. 8, 1794. Had some remarkable freedom and affection this morning, both in family and secret prayer. With many tears I dedicated myself, body and soul, to the service of Jesus; and earnestly implored satisfaction respecting the path of duty. I feel a growing deadness for all earthly comforts; and derive my happiness immediately from God himself. May I still endure, as Moses did, by seeing him who is invisible?

"Oct. 10. Enjoyed much freedom to day in the family. Whilst noticing in prayer the state of millions of heathen who know not God, I felt the aggregate value of their immortal souls with peculiar energy.

"Afterwards was much struck whilst (on my knees before God in secret) I read the fourth chapter of Micah. The ninth verse

I fancied very applicable to the church in Cannon Street: but what reason is there for such a cry about so insignificant a worm as I am? The third chapter of Habakkuk too well expresses that mixture of *solemnity* and *confidence* with which I contemplate the work of the mission.

"Whilst at prayer-meeting to night, I learned more of the meaning of some passages of scripture than ever before. Suitable frames of soul are like good lights, in which a painting appears to its full advantage. I had often meditated on Phil. iii. 7, 8, and Gal. vi. 14: but never *felt* crucifixion to the world, and disesteem for all that it contains as at that time. All prospects of pecuniary independence, and growing reputation, with which in unworthier moments I had amused myself, were now chased from my mind; and the desire of living *wholly* to Christ swallowed up every other thought. Frowns and smiles, fulness or want, honor and reproach, were now equally indifferent; and when I concluded the meeting, my whole soul felt, as it were, going after the lost sheep of Christ among the heathen.

"I do feel a growing satisfaction in the proposal of spending my whole life in something nobler than the locality of this island will admit. I long to raise my Master's banner in climes where the sound of his fame hath but scarcely reached. He hath said, for my encouragement, that *all* nations shall flow unto it.

"The conduct and success of Stach, Boonish, and other Moravian missionaries in Greenland, both confound and stimulate me. O Lord, forgive my past indolence in thy service, and help me to redeem the residue of my days for exertions more worthy a friend of mankind and a servant of God.

"Oct. 13. Being taken up with visitors the former part of the day, I spent the after part in application to the Bengal language, and found the difficulties I apprehend vanish as fast as I encountered them. I read and prayed, prayed and read, and made no small advances. Blessed be God?

"Oct. 15. There are in Birmingham fifty thousand inhabitants; and exclusive of the vicinity, ten ministers who preach the fundamental truths of the gospel. In Hindostan there are twice as many millions of inhabitants; and not so many gospel preachers. Now Jesus Christ hath commanded his ministers to go into all the world, and preach the gospel, to every creature. Why should we be so disproportionate in our labors? Peculiar circumstances must not be urged against positive commands; I am therefore bound, if others do not go, to make the means more proportionate to the multitude.

"To night, reading some letters from brother Carey, in which he speaks of his wife's illness when she first came into the

country, I endeavored to realize myself not only with a sick, but a *dead* wife. The thought was like a cold dagger to my heart at first; but on recollection I considered that the same God ruled in India as in Europe; and that he could either preserve her, or support me, as well there as here. My business is only to be where he would have me. Other things I leave to him. O Lord, though with timidity, yet I hope not without satisfaction, I look every possible evil in the face, and say, 'Thy will be done.'

"Oct. 17. This is the first day I have set apart for extraordinary devotion in relation to my present exercise of mind. Rose earlier than usual, and began the day in prayer that God would be with me in every part of it, and grant that the end I have in view may be clearly ascertained—the knowledge of his will.

"Considering the importance of the work before me, I began at the foundation of all religion, and reviewed the grounds on which I stood; the being of a God, the relation of mankind to him, with the divine inspiration of the scriptures; and the review afforded me great satisfaction.\* I also compared the different religions which claimed divine origin, and found little difficulty in determining which had most internal evidence of its divinity. I attentively read, and seriously considered Doddridge's three excellent sermons on the evidences of the Christian religion, which was followed by such conviction, that I had hardly patience to conclude the book before I fell on my knees before God to bless him for such a religion, established on such a basis; and I have received more *solid* satisfaction this day upon the subject than ever I did before.

"I also considered, since the gospel is true, since Christ is the head of the church, and his will is the law of all his followers, what are the obligations of his servants in respect of the enlargement of his kingdom. I here referred to our Lord's commission, which I could not but consider as universal in its object, and permanent in its obligations. I read brother Carey's remarks upon it—and as the command has never been repealed; as there is millions of beings in the world on whom the command may be exercised; as I can produce no counter revelation; and as I lie under no natural impossibilities of performing it, I concluded that I as a servant of Christ, was bound by this law.

\* There is a wide difference between admitting these principles in theory, and *making use of them*. David might have worn Saul's accoutrements at a parade; but in meeting Goliath he must go forth in an armor that had been *tried*. A mariner may sit in his cabin at his ease while the ship is in harbor: but ere he undertakes a voyage he must examine its soundness, and whether it will endure the storms which may overtake him.

"I took the narrative of my experience, and statement of my views on the subject in my hand, and bowing down before God, I earnestly besought an impartial and an enlightened spirit. I then perused that paper; and can now say, that I have (allowing for my own fallibility) no one doubt upon the subject. I therefore resolved this solemn season with reading a portion of both Testaments, and earnest prayer to God for my family, my people, the heathen world, the society, and particularly for the success of our dear brethren Thomas and Carey, and his blessing, presence, and grace to be ever my guide and glory. Accordingly I read the 49th chapter of Isaiah; and with what sweetness! I never read a chapter in private with such feelings, since I have been in the ministry. The 8, 9, 10, 20 and 21 verses I thought remarkably suitable.

"Read also part of the epistle to the Ephesians, and the first chapter to the Philipians. O that for *me* to live may be *Christ* alone! Blessed be my dear Saviour in prayer I have had such fellowship with him, as would warm me in Greenland, comfort me in New Zealand, and rejoice me in the valley of the shadow of death!

"Oct. 18. I dreamed that I saw one of the Christian Hindoos. O how I loved him! I long to realize my dream. How pleasant will it be to sit down at the Lord's table with our black brethren, and hear Jesus preached in their language. Surely then will come to pass the saying that is written, 'In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, all are one in him.'

"Have been happy to-day in completing the manuscript of Periodical Accounts, No. 1. Any thing relative to the salvation of the heathen, brings a certain pleasure with it. I find I cannot pray, nor converse nor read, nor study, nor preach with satisfaction without reference to this subject.

"Oct. 20. Was a little discouraged on reading Mr. Zeigenbald's conferences with the Malabarians, till I recollected, what ought to be ever present to my mind in brother Carey's words. *The work is God's*.

"In the evening I found some little difficulty with the language; but considering how merchants and captains overcome this difficulty for the sake of wealth, I sat confounded before the Lord that I should ever have indulged such a thought; as looking up to him, I set about it with cheerfulness and found that I was making a sensible advance, although I can never apply till 11 o'clock at night, on account of my other duties.\*

\* Night studies, often continued till two or three o'clock in the morning, it is to be feared, were the first occasion of impairing Mr. Pearce's health and brought



"Preached from 2 Kings, iv. 26. 'It is well.' Was much enlarged both in thought and expression. Whilst speaking of the satisfaction enjoyed by a truly pious mind, when it feels itself in all circumstances and times in the hand of a *good God*, I felt, that were the universe destroyed, and I the only being in it, beside God, HE is fully adequate to my complete happiness; and had I been in an African wood, surrounded with venomous serpents, devouring beasts, and savage men, in such a frame, I should be the subject of perfect peace and exalted joy. Yes, O my God, thou hast taught me that *thou alone* art worthy of my confidence; and with this sentiment fixed in my heart, I am free from all solicitude about any temporal prospects or concerns. If *thy* presence be enjoyed, poverty shall be riches, darkness light, affliction prosperity reproach my honor, and fatigue my rest: and thou hast said, 'My presence shall go with thee.' Enough, Lord, I ask for nothing, nothing more.

"But how sad the proofs of our depravity; and how insecure the best frames we enjoy! Returning home, a wicked expression from a person who passed me caught my ear, and occurred so often to my thoughts for some minutes, as to bring guilt upon my mind, and overwhelm me with the shame before God. But I appealed to God for my hatred of all such things, secretly confessed the sin of my heart, and again ventured to the mercy-seat. On such occasions, how precious a Mediator is to the soul.

"Oct. 22. I did not for the former part of the day feel my wonted ardor for the work of a missionary; but rather an inclination to consult flesh and blood, and look at the worst side of things. I did so; but when on my knees before God in prayer about it, I first considered that my judgment was still equally satisfied, and my conscience so convinced, that I durst not relinquish the work for a thousand worlds. And then I thought that this dull frame had not been without its use; as I was now fully convinced, that my desires to go did not arise from any fluctuation of inconsistent passions, but the settled convictions of my judgment. I therefore renewed my vows unto the Lord, that let what difficulties soever be in the way, I would (provided the society approved) surmount them all. I felt a kind of unutterable satisfaction of mind, in my resolution of leaving the decision in the hands

of my brethren. May God rightly dispose their hearts! I have no doubt but he will.

"Oct. 23. Have found a little time to apply to the Bengalee language. How pleasant it is to work for God! Love transforms thorns to roses, and makes pain itself a pleasure. I never sat down to any study with such peculiar and continued satisfaction. The thought of exalting the Redeemer in this language, is a spur to my application paramount to every discouragement for want of a living tutor. I have passed this day with an abiding satisfaction respecting my present views.

"Oct. 24. O for the enlightening, enlivening, and sanctifying presence of God to-day! It is the *second* of those days of extraordinary devotion which I have set apart for seeking God, in relation to the mission. How shall I spend it? I will devote the morning to prayer, reading, and meditation; and the afternoon to visiting the wretched, and relieving the needy. May God accept my services, guide me by his counsel, and employ me for his praise!

"Having besought the Lord that he would not suffer me to deceive myself in so important a matter as that which I had now retired to consider, and exercised some confidence that he would be the rewarder of those who diligently seek him, I read the 119th Psalm at the conclusion of my prayer, and felt and wondered at the congruity of so many of the verses to the breathings of my own heart. Often, with holy admiration, I paused, and read, and thought, and prayed over the verse again, especially verses 20, 31, 59, 60, 112, 145, 146. 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. I have stuck unto thy testimonies, O Lord, put me not to shame.'

"Most of the morning I spent in seriously reading Mr. Horne's *Letters on Missions*, having first begged of the Lord to make the perusal profitable to my instruction in the path of duty. To the interrogation, 'Which of you will forsake all, deny himself, take up his cross, and, if God pleases, die for his religion?' I replied spontaneously, Blessed be God, I am willing! Lord, help me to accomplish it!

"Closed this season with reading the 61st and 62nd chapters of Isaiah, and prayer for the church of God at large, my own congregation, the heathens, the society, brethren Thomas and Carey, all missionaries whom God hath sent of every denomination, my own case, my wife and family, and for assistance in my work.

"The after part of this day has been gloomy indeed. All the painful circumstances which can attend my going have met upon my heart, and formed a load almost insupportable. A number of things,

on that train of nervous sensations with which he was afterwards afflicted. Though not much accustomed to converse on this subject, he once acknowledged to a brother in the ministry, that owing to his enervated state, he sometimes dreaded the approach of public services to such a degree, that he would rather have submitted to stripes than engage in them: and that while in the pulpit he was frequently distressed with the apprehension of falling over it.

which have been some time accumulating, have united their pressure, and made me groan being burdened. Whilst at a prayer meeting I looked round on my Christian friends, and said to myself, A few months more, and probably I shall leave you all! But in the deepest of my gloom, I resolved though faint yet to pursue, not doubting but my Lord would give me strength equal to the day.

"I had scarcely formed this resolution before it occurred, My Lord and Master was a man of sorrows. Oppressed, and covered with blood, he cried, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' Yet in the depth of his agonies, he added, 'Thy will be done.' This thought was to me what the sight of the cross was to Bunyan's pilgrim; I lost my burden. Spent the remainder of the meeting in sweet communion with God.

"But on coming home, the sight of Mrs. P. replaced my load. She had for some time been much discouraged at the thoughts of going. I therefore felt reluctant to say any thing on this subject, thinking it would be unpleasant to her: but though I strove to conceal it, an involuntary sigh betrayed my uneasiness. She kindly inquired the cause. I avoided at first an explanation, till she, guessing the reason, said to this effect: 'I hope you will be no more uneasy on my account. For the last two or three days, I have been more comfortable than ever in the thought of going. I have considered the steps you are pursuing to know the mind of God, and I think you cannot take more proper ones. When you consult the ministers, you should represent your obstacles as strongly as your inducements; and then, if they advise your going, though the parting from my friends will be almost insupportable, yet I will make myself as happy as I can, and God can make me happy any where.'

"Should this little Diary fall into the hands of a man having the soul of a missionary, circumstanced as I am, he will be the only man capable of sharing my peace, my joy, my gratitude, my rapture of soul. Thus at evening tide it is light; thus God brings his people through fire and through water into a wealthy place; thus those who ask do receive, and their joy is full. 'O love the Lord, ye his saints: there is no want to them that fear him!'

"Oct. 26. Had much enlargement this morning, whilst speaking on the nature, extent and influence of divine love; what designs it formed—with what energy it acted—with what perseverance it pursued its object—what obstacles it surmounted—what difficulties it conquered—and what sweetness it imparted under the heaviest loads, and severest trials! Almost through

the day I enjoyed a very desirable frame, and on coming home, my wife and I had some conversation on the subject of my going. She said, though in general the thought was painful, yet there were some seasons when she had no preference, but felt herself disposed to go or stay, as the Lord should direct.

"This day wrote to brother Fuller, briefly stating my desires, requesting his advice, and proposing a meeting of the committee on the business. I feel great satisfaction arising from my leaving the matter to the determination of my honored brethren, and to God through them.

"Oct. 27. To-day I sent a packet to our brethren in India. I could not forbear telling brother Carey all my feelings, views, and expectations: but without saying I should be entirely governed by the opinion of the society.

"Oct. 28. Still panting to preach Jesus among my fellow sinners to whom he is yet unknown. Wrote to Dr. Rogers, of Philadelphia, to-day, upon the subject, with freedom and warmth; and inquired whether, whilst the people of the United States were forming societies to encourage arts, liberty and emigration, there could not a few be found among them who would form a society for the transmission of the word of life to the benighted heathens; or in case that could not be, whether they might not strengthen our hands in Europe, by some benevolent proofs of concurring with us in a design, which they speak of with such approbation? With this I sent Horne's Letters. I will follow both with my prayers, and who can tell?

"Oct. 29. Looked over the Code of Hindoo Laws to-day. How much is there to admire in it, founded on the principles of justice. The most salutary regulations are adopted in many circumstances. But what a pity that so much excellence should be abased by laws to establish or countenance idolatry, magic, prostitution, prayers for the dead, false-witnessing, theft and suicide. How perfect is the morality of the gospel of Jesus; and how desirable that they should embrace it! Ought not means to be used? Can we assist them too soon? There is reason to think that their Shasters were penned about the beginning of the Kollee Jogee, which must be soon after the deluge: and are not four thousand years long enough for one hundred millions of men to be under the empire of the devil?

"Oct. 31. I am encouraged to enter upon this day (which I set apart for supplicating God) by a recollection of his promises to those who seek him. If the sacred word be true, the servants of God can never seek his face in vain; and as I am conscious of my sincerity and earnest desire



only to know his pleasure that I may perform it, I find a degree of confidence that I shall realize the fulfilment of the word on which he causeth me to hope.

"Began the day with solemn prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in my present exercise, that so I might enjoy the spirit and power of prayer, and have my personal religion improved, as well as my public steps directed. In this duty I found a little quickening.

"I then read over the narrative of my experience, and my journal. I find my views are still the same; but my heart is much more established than when I began to write.

"Was much struck in reading Paul's words in 2 Cor. i. 17, when after speaking of his purpose to travel for the preaching of the gospel, he saith, 'Did I then use lightness when I was thus minded? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea—nay, nay?' The *piety* of the apostle in not purposing after the flesh, the *seriousness* of spirit with which he formed his designs, and his steadfast adherence to them were in my view worthy of the highest admiration and strictest imitation.

"Thinking that I might get some assistance from David Brainard's experience, I read his life to the time of his being appointed a missionary among the Indians. The exalted devotion of that dear man almost made me question mine. Yet at some seasons he speaks of sinking as well as rising. His singular piety excepted, his feelings, prayers, desires, comforts, hopes, and sorrows, are my own; and if I could follow him in nothing else, I knew I had been enabled to say this with him, 'I feel exceedingly calm, and quite resigned to God respecting my future improvement (or station) *when and where* he pleased. My faith lifted me above the world, and removed all those mountains, which I could not look over of late. I thought I wanted not the favor of man to lean upon; for I knew God's favor was infinitely better, and that, it was no matter *where, or when, or how* Christ should send me, nor with what trials he should still exercise me, if I might be prepared for his work and will.'

"Read the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth chapters of the second epistle to the Corinthians. Felt a kind of placidity, but not much joy. On beginning the concluding prayer, I had no strength to wrestle, nor power with God at all. I seemed as one desolate and forsaken. I prayed for myself, the society, the missionaries, the converted Hindoos, the church in Cannon street, my family, and ministry; but yet all was dulness, and I feared I had offended the Lord. I felt but little zeal for the mis-

sion, and was about to conclude with a lamentation over the hardness of my heart; when of a sudden it pleased God to smite the rock with the rod of his spirit, and immediately the waters began to flow. O what a heavenly, glorious, melting power was it! My eyes, almost closed with weeping, hardly suffer me to write. I feel it over again. O what a view of the love of a crucified Redeemer did I enjoy! the attractions of his cross, how powerful! I was as a giant refreshed with new wine, as to my animation; like Mary at the Master's feet weeping, for tenderness of soul; like a little child, for submission to my heavenly Father's will; and like Paul, for a victory over all self-love, and creature love, and fear of man, when these things stand in the way of my duty. The interest that Christ took in the redemption of the heathen, the situation of our brethren in Bengal, the worth of the soul, and the plain command of Jesus Christ, together with an irresistible drawing of soul, which by far exceeded any thing I ever felt before, and is impossible to be described to, or conceived of by those who have never experienced it; all compelled me to *vow* that I would, by his leave, serve him among the heathen. The bible lying open before me (upon my knees) many passages caught my eye and confirmed the purposes of my heart. If ever in my life I knew any thing of the influences of the Holy Spirit, I did at this time. I was swallowed up in God. Hunger, fullness, cold, heat, friends, and enemies, all seemed nothing before God. I was in a new world. All was delightful; for Christ was all, and in all. Many times I concluded prayer, but when rising from my knees, communion with God was so desirable, that I was sweetly drawn to it again and again, till my animal strength was almost exhausted. Then I thought it would be pleasure to *burn* for God.

"And now while I write, such a heavenly sweetness fills my soul, that no exterior circumstances can remove it; and I do uniformly feel, that the more I am thus, the more I pant for the service of my blessed Jesus among the heathen. Yes, my dear, my dying Lord, I am thine, thy servant; and if I neglect the service of so good a Master, I may well expect a guilty conscience in life, and a death awful as that of Judas or of Spira!

"This evening I had a meeting with my friends. Returned much dejected. Reviewed a letter from brother Fuller, which, though he says he has many objections to my going, yet is so affectionately expressed as to yield me a gratification.

"Nov. 3. This evening received a letter from brother Ryland, containing many objections: but contradiction itself is pleasant

when it is the voice of judgment mingled with affection. I wish to remember that *I may be mistaken*, though I cannot say I am at present convinced that it is so. I am happy to find that brother Ryland approves of my referring it to the committee. I have much confidence in the judgment of my brethren, and hope I shall be perfectly satisfied with their advice. I do think, however, if they knew how earnestly I pant for the work, it would be impossible for them to withhold their ready acquiescence. O Lord, thou knowest my sincerity, and that if I go not to the work it will not be owing to any reluctance on my part! If I stay in England, I fear I shall be a poor useless drone; or if a sense of duty prompt me to activity, I doubt whether I shall ever know inward peace and joy again. O Lord, I am, thou knowest I am, *oppressed*; undertake for me!

"Nov. 5. At times to-day I have been reconciled to the thought of staying if any brethren should so advise; but at other times I seem to think I could not. I look at brother Carey's portrait as it hangs in my study, I love him in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and long to join his labors; every look calls up a hundred thoughts, all of which inflame my desire to be a fellow-laborer with him in the work of the Lord. One thing, however, I am resolved upon, that, the Lord keeping me, if I cannot go abroad, I will do all I can to serve the mission at home.

"Nov. 7. This is the last day of peculiar devotion before the deciding meeting. May I have strength to wrestle with God to-day for his wisdom to preside in the committee, and by faith to leave the issue to their determination.

"I did not enjoy much enlargement in prayer to-day. My mind seems at present incapable of those sensations of joy with which I have lately been much indulged, through its strugglings in relation to my going or staying: yet I have been enabled to commit the issue into the hands of God, as he may direct my brethren, hoping that their advice will be agreeable to his will."

The result of the committee meeting has already been related; together with the state of his mind, as far as could be collected from his letters, for some time after it. The termination of these tender and interesting exercises, and of all his other labors, in so speedy a removal from the present scene of action, may teach us not to draw any certain conclusion as to the designs of God concerning our future labors, from the ardor or sincerity of our feelings. He may take it well that "it was in our hearts to build him an house," though he should for wise reasons have determined not to gratify us. Suffice it, that in matters

of *everlasting moment* he has engaged to "perfect that which concerns us." In this he hath condescended to bind himself, as by an oath, for our consolation; here therefore we may safely consider our spiritual desires as indicative of his designs: but it is otherwise in various instances with regard to present duty.

### CHAPTER III.

*His exercises and labors, from the time of his giving up the idea of going abroad, to the commencement of his last affliction.*

HAD the multiplied labors of this excellent man permitted his keeping a regular diary, we may see by the foregoing specimens of a single month, what a rich store of truly Christian experience would have pervaded these Memoirs. We should then have been better able to trace the gradual openings of his holy mind, and the springs of that extraordinary unction of spirit, and energy of action, by which his life was distinguished. As it is, we can only collect a few gleanings, partly from memory, and partly from letters communicated by his friends.

This chapter will include a period of about four years, during which he went twice to London to collect for the *Baptist mission*, and once he visited Dublin, at the invitation of the *Evangelical Society* in that city.

There appears throughout the general tenor of his life, a singular submissiveness to the will of God; and what is worthy of notice, this disposition was generally most conspicuous when his own will was most counteracted. The justness of this remark is sufficiently apparent from his letter to Mrs. Pearce, of November 13, 1794, after the decision of the committee; and the same spirit was carried into the common concerns of life. Thus, about a month afterwards, when his dear Louisa was ill of a fever, he thus writes from Northampton to Mrs. Pearce:

"December 13, 1794.

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I am just brought on the wings of celestial mercy safe to my Sabbath's station. I am well; and my dear friends here seem healthy and happy: but I feel for *you*. I long to know how our dear Louisa's pulse beats: I fear still feverish. We must not, however, suffer ourselves to be infected with a mental fever on this account. Is she ill? It is right. Is she very ill?—dying? It still is right. Is she gone to join the heavenly choristers? It is all right, notwithstanding our repinings—Repi-



nings! no; we will not repine. It is best she should go. It is best for *her*. This we must allow. It is best for *us*. Do we expect it? O what poor, ungrateful, short-sighted worms are we! Let us submit, my Sarah, till we come to heaven: if we do not *then* see that it is best, let us then complain. But why do I attempt to console? Perhaps an indulgent Providence has ere now dissipated your fears: or if that same *kind Providence* has removed our babe, you have consolation enough in him who suffered more than we; and more than enough to quiet all our passions, in that astonishing consideration,—‘*God so loved the world, that he spared not his own Son.*’ Did God cheerfully give the holy child Jesus for us? and shall we refuse our child to him! He gave his Son to *suffer*; he takes our children to *enjoy*: Yes, to enjoy *himself*. S. P.”

In June, 1795, he attended the association at Kettering, partly on account of some missionary business there to be transacted. That was a season of great joy to many, especially the last forenoon previous to parting. From thence he wrote to Mrs. Pearce as follows:

“From a pew in the house of God at Kettering, with my cup of joy running over, I address you by the hand of brother Simmons. Had it pleased Divine Providence to have permitted your accompanying me, my pleasures would have received no small addition; because I should have hoped that you would have been filled with similar consolation, and have received equal edification by the precious means of grace on which I have attended. Indeed, I never remember to have enjoyed a public meeting to such a high degree since I have been in the habit of attending upon them. Oh that I may return to you, and the dear church of God, in the *fulness* of the blessing of the gospel of Christ! I hope, my beloved, that you are not without the enjoyment of the sweetness and supports of the blessed gospel. Oh that you may get and keep near to God, and in *him* find infinitely more than you can possibly lose by your husband’s absence!

“Mr. Hall preached, last evening, from 1 Peter i. 8. A most evangelical and experimental season! I was charmed and warmed. Oh that Jesus may go on to reveal himself to him as altogether lovely! I am unable to write more now. To-day I set off for Northampton, and preach there to-night. The Lord bless you!”

In July, 1795, he received a pressing invitation from *The general Evangelical Society* in Dublin, to pay them a visit, and to assist in diffusing the gospel of the grace of God in that kingdom. To this invita-

tion he replied in the following letter, addressed to Dr. McDowal:

“*Birmingham, August 3, 1795.*

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“I received your favor of the 22d ult., and for the interesting reason you assign, transmit a ‘speedy answer.’ The society, on whose behalf you wrote, I have ever considered with the respect due to the real friends of the best of causes—the cause of God and of his Christ: a cause which embraces the most important and durable interests of our fellow men: and your name, dear sir, I have been taught to hold in more than common esteem by my dear brother and father, Messrs. Birt and Francis. The benevolent institution which you are engaged in supporting, I am persuaded deserves more than the good wishes or prayers of your brethren in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, on this side the channel; and it will yield me substantial pleasure to afford personal assistance in your pious labors. But, for the present, I am sorry to say, I must decline your proposal: being engaged to spend a month in London this autumn, on the business of our *Mission Society*, of which you have probably heard.

“When I formed my present connections with the church in Birmingham, I proposed an annual freedom for six weeks from my pastoral duties; and should the ‘Evangelical Society’ express a wish for my services the ensuing year, I am perfectly inclined, God willing, to spend that time beneath their direction, and at what part of the year they conceive a visit would be most serviceable to the good design. I only request, that should this be their desire, I may receive the information as soon as they can conveniently decide, that I may withhold myself from other engagements, which may interfere with the time they may appoint. I entreat you to make my Christian respects acceptable to the gentlemen who compose the society, and assure yourself that I am, dear sir, respectfully and affectionately,

“Your brother in our Lord Jesus,

“S. P.”

The invitation was repeated, and he complied with their request, engaging to go over in the month of June, 1796.

A little before this journey, it occurred to Dr. Ryland, that an itinerating mission into Cornwall might be of use to the cause of true religion, and that two acceptable ministers might be induced to undertake it; and that if executed during the vacation at the Bristol academy, two of the students might supply their place. He communicated his thoughts to Mr. Pearce, who wrote thus in answer:

"May 30, 1796.

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

"I thank you a thousand times for your last letter. Blessed be God who hath put it into your heart to propose such a plan for increasing the boundaries of Zion. I have read your letter to our wisest friends here, and they heard it with great joy. The plan, the place, the mode, the persons, all, *all* meet our most affectionate wishes. How did such a scheme never enter our minds before! Alas, we have nothing in our hearts that is worth having, save what God puts there. Do write to me when at Dublin, and tell me whether it be resolved on; when they set out, &c. I hope ere long to hear, that as many disciples are employed in Great Britain, as the Saviour employed in Judea. When he gives the word, great will be the company of the preachers.

"Oh, my dear brother, let us go on still praying, contriving, laboring, defending, until 'the little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and the small stone from the mountain fill the whole earth.'

"What pleasures do those lose who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause! How thankful should we be, that we are not strangers to the joy which the friends of Zion feel when the Lord turneth again Zion's captivity. I am beyond expression, your affectionate brother in Christ,  
"S. P."

On May 31, he set off for Dublin, and "the Lord prospered his way, so that he arrived at the time appointed; and from every account it appears, that he was not only sent *in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace*, but that the Lord himself went with him. His preaching was not only highly acceptable to every class of hearers, but the word came from him with power, and there is abundant reason to believe, that many will, through eternity, praise God for sending his message to them by this dear ambassador of Christ. His memory lives in their hearts, and they join with the other churches of Christ in deploring the loss they have sustained by his death.

"He was earnestly solicited by the *Evangelical Society* to renew his visit to that kingdom in 1798. Ready to embrace every call of duty, he had signified his compliance; and the time was fixed: but the breaking out of the late rebellion prevented him from realizing his intention. This was a painful disappointment to many, who wished once more to see his face, and to have heard the glad tidings from his lips."

Such is the brief account of his visit to Dublin, given by Dr. McDowal. The

following letter was written to Mrs. Pearce, when he had been there a little more than a week:

"Dublin, June 31, 1796.

"I long to know how you do, and you will be as much concerned to know how I go on at this distance from you. I haste to satisfy your inquiries.

"I am in perfect health: am delightfully disappointed with the place and its inhabitants. I am very thankful that I came over. I have found much more religion here already than I expected to meet with during the whole of my stay. The prospect of usefulness is flattering. I have already many more friends (I hope *Christian* friends) than I can gratify by visits. Many doors are open for preaching the gospel in the city; and my country excursions will probably be few. Thus much for outline.

"But you will like to know how I spend my time, &c. Well then: I am at the house of Mr. H——, late high sheriff for the city: a gentleman of opulence, respectability, and evangelical piety. He is by profession a Calvinistic Presbyterian; an elder of Dr. McDowal's church; has a most amiable wife, and four children. I am very thankful for being placed here during my stay. I am quite at home, I mean as to ease and familiarity; for as to *style* of living I neither do, nor desire to equal it. Yet in my present situation it is convenient. It would however, be sickening and dull, had I not a God to go to, to converse with, to enjoy, and to call *my own*. Oh, 'tis this, 'tis *this*, my dearest Sarah, which gives a point to every enjoyment, and sweetens all the cup of life.

"The Lord's day after I wrote to you last, I preached for Dr. McDowal in the morning at half-past eleven; heard a Mr. Kilburne at five; and preached again at Plunket street at seven. On Tuesday evening I preached at an hospital, and on Thursday evening at Plunket street again. Yesterday, for the Baptists in the morning, Dr. McDowal at five, and at Plunket street at seven.

"The hours of worship will appear singular to you: they depend on the usual *meal* times. We breakfast at ten; dine between four and five, sometimes between five and six; take tea from seven to nine; and sup from ten to twelve.

"I thank God that I possess an abiding determination to aim at the *consciences* of the people in every discourse. I have borne the most positive testimony against the prevailing evils of professors here: as, sensuality, gaiety, vain amusements, neglect of the Sabbath, &c., and last night, told an immense crowd of professors of the first rank, 'that if they made custom and



fashion their plea, they were awfully deluding their souls; for it had always been the fashion to insult God, to dissipate time, and to pursue the broad road to hell; but it would not lessen their torments there that the way to damnation was the fashion.

"I expected my faithfulness would have given them offence; but I am persuaded it was the way to please the Lord, and those whom I expected would be enemies, are not only at peace with me, but even renounce their sensual indulgencies to attend on my ministry. I do assuredly believe that God hath sent me hither for good. The five o'clock meetings are miserably attended in general. In a house that will hold one thousand five hundred, or two thousand people, you will hardly see above fifty! Yesterday morning I preached on the subject of *public worship*, from Psalm v. 7, and seriously warned them against preferring their bellies to God, and their own houses to his. I was delighted and surprised, at the five o'clock meeting to see the place nearly full. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes. Never, never did I more feel how weak I am in myself—a mere nothing; and how strong I am in the omnipotence of God. I feel a superiority to all fear, and possess a conscious dignity in being the ambassador of God. Oh help me to praise, for it is he alone who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight; and still pray for me; for if he withdraw for a moment, I become as weak and unprofitable as the briars of the wilderness.

"You cannot think how much I am supported by the assurance that I have left a *praying people* at Birmingham; and I believe, that in answer to their prayers I have hitherto been wonderfully assisted in my public work, as well as enjoyed much in private devotion.

"I have formed a most pleasing acquaintance with several serious young men in the university here, and with two of the fellows of the college; most pious gentlemen indeed, who have undergone a world of reproach for Christ and his gospel, and have been forbidden to preach in the churches by the arch-bishop; but God has raised another house for them here where they preach with much success, and have begun a meeting in the college, which promises fresh prosperity to the cause of Jesus."

The following particulars, in addition to the above, are taken partly from some notes in his own hand-writing, and partly from the account given by his friend, Mr. Summers, who accompanied him during the latter part of his visits.

At his first arrival, the congregations were but thinly attended, and the Baptist

congregation in particular, amongst whom he delivered several discourses. It much affected him to see the whole city given to sensuality and worldly conformity; and especially to find those of his own denomination amongst the lowest, and least affected with their condition. But the longer he continued, the more the congregations increased, and every opportunity became increasingly interesting, both to him and them. His faithful remonstrances, and earnest recommendations of prayer-meetings to his Baptist friends, though at first apparently ill received, were well taken in the end; and he had the happiness to see in them some hopeful appearances of a return to God. On June the 20th he wrote to his friend, Mr. Summers, as follows:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"If you mean to abide by my opinion, I say, come to Dublin, and come directly! I have been most delightfully disappointed. I expected darkness and behold light; sorrow, and I have had cause for abundant joy. I thank God that I came hither, and hope that many as well as myself, will have cause to praise him. Never have I been more deeply taught my own nothingness; never hath the power of God more evidently rested upon me. The harvest here is great indeed; and the Lord of the harvest hath enabled me to labor in it with delight.

"I praise him for all that is past,  
I trust him for all that's to come."

"The Lord hath of late been doing great things for Dublin. Several of the young men in the college have been awakened; and two of the fellows are sweet evangelical preachers. One of them is of a spirit serene as the summer evening, and sweet as the breath of May. I am already intimate with them, and have spent several mornings in college with various students, who bid fair to be faithful watchmen on Jerusalem's walls. But I hope you will come; and then you will see for yourself. If not, I will give you some pleasant details when we meet in England. S. P."

Mr. Summers complied with this invitation; and of the last seven or eight days of Mr. Pearce's continuance at Dublin he himself thus writes:

"Monday, July 4. At three in the afternoon I went with my friend, Mr. Summers, to Mr. K——'s. Spent a very agreeable day. Miss A. K.—— remarked two wonders in Dublin; a praying society composed of students at college, and another of lawyers. The family were called together. We sung: I read, and expounded the xii. of Isaiah, and prayed. At seven we went to a prayer-meeting at Plunket street: very large attendance. Mr. R—— and Mr. S—— prayed, and I spoke from Ro-

mans, x. 12, 13. 'There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all who call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.' Many seemed affected. After I had closed the opportunity, I told them some of my own experience, and requested, that if any present wished for conversation, they would come to me, either that evening, or on Thursday evening in the vestry. Five persons came in: one had been long impressed with religion, but could never summons courage enough to open her heart before. Another, a Miss W——, attributed her first impression, under God, to my ministry; and told me that her father had regularly attended of late, and that her mother was so much alarmed as to be almost in despair. Poor girl! she seemed truly in earnest about her own soul, and as much concerned for her parents. The next had possessed a serious concern for some time, and of late had been much revived. One young lady, a Miss H——, staid in the meeting house, exceedingly affected indeed. Mr. K—— spoke to her; she said she would speak with me on Thursday.

"Tuesday, 5th. Went to Leislip. At seven, preached to a large and affected auditory.

"Wednesday, 6th. Mr. H—— and myself went to Mrs. M'G——, to inquire about the young lady who was so much affected at the meeting. Mrs. M'G—— said her mother and sister were pious; that she had been very giddy; but that last Lord's-day she was seriously awakened to a sense of sin; had expressed her delight in religion, and fled for refuge to the blood of Jesus. Her sister was introduced to me; a sweetly pious lady. I agreed to wait for an interview with the young lady at Mr. H——'s, in Eccles street to-morrow.

"Thursday, 7th. Miss H——, her sister, and Mrs. M'G——, came to Eccles street. A most delightful interview. Seldom have I seen such proficiency in so short a time. That day week, at Plunket street, she received her first serious impressions. Her concern deepened at Mass Lane, on Lord's-day morning; more so in the evening at Plunket-street, but most of all on Monday night. I exhorted them to begin a prayer and experience meeting; and they agreed. Blessed be God! this strengthens my hands greatly. At seven o'clock, preached at Plunket street, from Jer. l. 4. 5. 'Going and weeping—they shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward.' A full house and an impressive season. Tarried after the public services were ended, to converse on religion. The most pleasing case was a young man of Mr. D——'s.

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"Saturday, 9th. Went with my friend Mr. S——, to call on Miss H——. Found her at her mother's; we first passed the door; she ran out after us: seemed happy; but agitated. Ran, and called her mother; soon we saw the door of the parlor open, and a majestic lady appeared; who, as she entered the room, thus accosted me: 'Who art thou, oh blessed of the Lord? Welcome to the widow's house! Accept the widow's thanks for coming after the child whom thou hast begotten in the gospel!' I was too much overcome to do more than take by the hand the aged saint. A solemn silence ensued for a minute or two; when the old lady recovering, expressed the fullness of her satisfaction respecting the reality of the change effected in her daughter, and her gratitude for great refreshment of her own soul, by means of my poor labors. She said, she had known the Lord during forty years, being called under the ministry of John Fisher, in the open air, when on a visit to an officer who was her brother-in-law. She told us much of her experience, and promised to encourage the prayer-meeting, which I proposed to be held in her house every Lord's day evening. They are to begin to-morrow after preaching. It was a pleasant meeting and we returned with pleasure to Eccles street. After we rose up to come away, the old lady affectionately said, 'May the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush attend you wherever you go, for ever and ever!'"

The young lady some months after wrote to Mr. S——, and says amongst other things, "I have great reason to be thankful for the many blessings the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon me, and in particular for his sending Mr. Pearce to this city; and through his means I have been convinced of sin. I am happy to inform you, that through grace I am enabled to walk in the narrow path. The Lord has taken away all desire for worldly company; all my desires now are to attend on the means of grace. Blessed be his name, I often find him present in them. My mother and I often remember the happy time we spent in your company at our house. She often speaks of it with great pleasure, and blesses the Lord for the change which grace has wrought in me."

"Lord's-day, 10. (The last Sabbath.) Preached in the morning at Mary's abbey, from Job xxxiii. 27, 28, 'He looketh upon men, and if any say I have sinned, and perverteth that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.' A happy season. In the afternoon, having dined with Mr. W——, he took me to Swift's alley, the Baptist place of worship where I gave an exhortation on



brotherly love, and administered the Lord's supper. At Mr. W——'s motion the church requested me to look out a suitable minister for them. In the evening I preached at Plunket street, from 2 Tim. i. 18, 'The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day!' A very solemn season.

"Monday, 11. Met the dear Christian friends, for the last time, at a prayer-meeting in Plunket street. The Lord was there! Several friends spent the evening with us afterwards at Mr. H——'s.

"Tuesday, 12. Went aboard at four; arrived at Liverpool on Thursday; and safely at home on Friday, July 15, 1796. Blessed be the Preserver of men, the Saviour of sinners, and the help of his servants, for evermore, amen, amen!"

Some time after, writing, to his friend who accompanied him, he says, "I have received several letters from Dublin: two from Master B., one from Miss H——, one from M——, three or four from the Baptist friends, and some from others, whom I cannot recollect. Mr. K—— lately called on me in his way from Bath to Holyhead. We talked of you, and of our Lord, and did not part till we had presented ourselves before the throne."

During his labors in Dublin, he was strongly solicited to settle in a very flattering situation in the neighborhood;\* and a very liberal salary was offered him. On his positively declining it, mention was made of only *six months* of the year. When that was declined, *three months* were proposed; and when he was about to answer this in the negative, the party refused to receive his answer, desiring him to take time to consider of it. He did so; and though he entertained a very grateful sense of the kindness and generosity expressed by the proposal, yet after the maturest deliberation he thought it his duty to decline it. Mr. Pearce's modesty prevented his talking on such a subject; but it was known at the time by his friend who accompanied him, and since his death, has been frequently mentioned as an instance of his disinterested spirit.

His friends at Birmingham were ready to think it hard that he should be so willing to leave them to go on a mission among the heathen; but they could not well complain, and much less think ill of him, when they saw that such a willingness was more than could be effected by the most flattering prospects of a worldly nature, accompanied too with promising appearances of religious usefulness.

About a month after his return from Dublin, Mr. Pearce addressed a letter to Mr. Carey, in which he gives some farther account of Ireland, as well as of some other interesting matters:

"*Birmingham, Aug. 12. 1796.*

"Oh my dear brother, did you but know with what feelings I resume my pen, freely to correspond with you after receiving your very affectionate letter to myself, and perusing that which you sent by the same conveyance to the society, I am sure you would persuade yourself that I have no common friendship for you, and that your regards are at least returned with equal ardor.

"I fear (I had almost said) that I shall never see your face in the flesh; but if any thing can add too the joy which the presence of Christ, and conformity, perfect conformity to him, will afford in heaven, surely the certain prospect of meeting with my dear brother Carey there, is one of (if not) *the* greatest. Thrice happy should I be, if the providence of God would open a way for my partaking of your labors, your sufferings, and your pleasures on this side, the eternal world: but all my brethren here are of a mind, that I shall be more useful at home than abroad; and I, though reluctantly, submit. Yet I am truly with you in spirit. My heart is at Mudnabatty, and at times I even hope to find my body there: but with the Lord I leave it; *he* knows my wishes, my motives, my regret: *he* knows all my soul; and, depraved as it is, I feel an inexpressible satisfaction that he does know it. However, it is an humbling thought to me, that he sees I am unfit for such a station, and unworthy such an honor as to bear his name among the heathen. But I must be thankful still, that though he appoints me not to a post in foreign service, he will allow me to stand sentinel at home. In this situation may I have grace to be faithful unto death!

"I hardly wonder at your being pained on account of the effects produced on the minds of your European friends, by the news of your engagement in the Indigo business, because I imagine you are ignorant of the process of that matter amongst us. When I received the news, I glorified God in sincerity, on account of it, and gave most hearty thanks to him for his most gracious appearance on your behalf: but at the same time I feared, lest through that undertaking, the work of the mission might in some way or other be impeded. The same impression was made on the minds of many others: yet no blame was attached, in our view, to you. Our minds were only alarmed for the future; not disposed to censure for the past. Had you seen a faithful copy of the prayers, the praises, and the conversation of the day

\* At the Black Rock, the residence of some of the most genteel families in the vicinity of Dublin.

in which your letters were read, I know you would not have entertained one unkind thought of the society towards you. Oh no, my dear brother, far be it from us to lay an atom upon your spirits of a painful nature. Need I say, we do love, we do respect you, we do confide too much in you to *design* the smallest occasion of distress to your heart. But I close this subject. In future we will atone for an expression that might bear a harsh construction. We will strengthen, we will support, we will comfort, we will encourage you in your arduous work, all, *all* shall be love and kindness; glory to God and good will to men. If I have done aught that is wrong, as an individual, pardon me: If we have said aught amiss, as a society, pardon us. Let us forbear one another in love, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

"By the time this reaches you, I hope you will have received Nos. I. and II. of Periodical Accounts. Should you find any thing in them, which you think had better be omitted, pray be free in mentioning it, and in future your instructions shall be fully attended to. We have taken all the pains, and used all the caution in our power to render them unexceptionable; but you can better judge in some respects than we. If you should not approve of all (though we are not conscious of any thing that you will disapprove) you will not be offended, but believe we have done our best, and with your remarks, hope to do better still.

With pleasure approaching to rapture, I read the last accounts you sent us. I never expected immediate success: the prospect is truly greater than my most sanguine hopes. 'The kingdom of heaven is like to a little leaven hid in three measures of meal, till the *whole* is leavened.' Blessed be God! the leaven is in the meal, and its influence is already discoverable. A great God is doing great things by you. Go on, my dearest brother, go on: God will do greater things than these. Jesus is worthy of a *world* of praise: and shall *Hindustan* not praise him? Surely he shall see of the travail of his soul *there*, and the sower and the reaper shall rejoice together. Already the empire of darkness totters, and soon it shall doubtless fall. Blessed be the laborers in this important work; and blessed be *He* who giveth them hearts and strength to labor, and promises that they shall not labor in vain!

"Do not fear the want of money. *God* is for us, and the silver and the gold are his; and so are the hearts of those who possess the most of it. I will travel from the Land's end to the Orkney's but we will get money enough for all the demands of the mission. I have never had a fear on that head: a little exertion will do wonders; and past

experience justifies every confidence. *Men*, we only want; and God shall find them for us in due time.

"Is brother Fountain arrived? We hope he will be an acceptable remittance, and, *vita voce*, compensate for the lack of epistolary communications.

"I rejoice in contemplating a church of our Lord Jesus Christ in Bengal, formed upon his own plan. Why do not the Hindoo converts join it? Lord, help their unbelief! But perhaps the drop is now withheld, that you may by and by have the shower, and lift up your eyes, and say, 'These, whence came they? They fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows.' For three years, we read of few baptized by the first disciples of our Lord; but on the fourth, three thousand, and five thousand openly avowed him. The Lord send *you* such another Pentecost!

"I intend to write my dear brother a long letter. It will prove my *desire* to gratify him, if it do no more. I wish that I knew in what communications your other correspondents will be most deficient: then I would try to supply their omissions.

"I will begin with myself: but I have nothing good to say. I think I am the most vile ungrateful servant that ever Jesus Christ employed in his church. At some times, I question whether I ever knew the grace of God in truth; and at others, I hesitate on the most important points of Christian faith. I have lately had peculiar struggles of this kind with my own heart, and have often half concluded to speak no more in the name of the Lord. When I am preparing for the pulpit, I fear I am going to avow fables for facts, and doctrines of men for the truths of God? In conversation I am obliged to be silent, lest my tongue should belie my heart. In prayer I know not what to say, and at times think prayer altogether useless. Yet I cannot wholly surrender my hope, or my profession. Three things I find, above all others, tend to my preservation: First, A recollection of a time, when, *at once*, I was brought to abandon the practice of sins, which the fear of damnation could never bring me to relinquish before. Surely I say, this must be the finger of God, according to the scripture doctrine of regeneration: Secondly, I feel such a consciousness of guilt, that nothing but the gospel scheme can satisfy my mind respecting the hope of salvation: and Thirdly, I see that what true devotion does appear in the world, seems only to be found among those to whom Christ is precious.

"But I frequently find a backwardness to secret prayer, and much deadness in it; and it puzzles me to see how this can be consistent with a life of grace. However, I resolve, that let what will become of me,



I will do all I can for God while I live, and leave the rest to him; and this I usually experience to be the best way to be at peace.

"I believe, that if I were more fully given up to God, I should be free from these distressing workings of mind; and then I long to be a missionary where I should have temptations to nothing but to abound in the work of the Lord, and lay myself entirely out for him. In such a situation, I think pride would have but little food, and faith more occasion for exercise; so that the spiritual life, and inward religion would thrive better than they do now.

"At times, indeed, I do feel, I trust, genuine contrition, and sincerely lament my short-comings before God. Oh the sweets that accompany true repentance! Yes, I love to be abased before God. 'There it is I find my blessing.' May the Lord daily and hourly bring me low, and keep me so!

"As to my public work, I find, whilst engaged in it, little cause to complain for want either of matter or words. My labors are acceptable, and not altogether unprofitable, to the hearers; but what is this to me, if my own soul starves whilst others are fed by me? Oh, my brother, I need your prayers, and I feel a great satisfaction in the hope that you do not forget me. Oh, that I may be kept faithful unto death? Indeed, in the midst of my strugglings, a gleam of hope, that I shall at last awake in the likeness of God, affords me greater joy than words can express. To be with Christ, is far better than to continue sinning here; but if the Lord hath any thing to do by me his will be done.

"I have never so fully opened my case to any one before. Your freedom on similar topics encourages me to make my complaint to you, and I think if you were near me, I should feel a great relief in revealing to you all my heart. But I shall fatigue you with my moanings; so I will have done on this subject.

"It is not long since I returned from a kind of mission to *Ireland*. A society is established in Dublin for the purpose of inviting from England, ministers of various denominations, to assist in promoting the interest of the kingdom of Christ there. Some of our Baptist brethren had been there before me, as Rippon, Langdon, Francis, and Birt; and I think the plan is calculated for usefulness. I have, at Dr Rippon's request, sent him some remarks on my visit, for the Register; but as it is probable you will receive this before that comes to hand, I will say something of my excursion here.

"Having engaged to spend six Lord's-days in that kingdom, I arrived there the day before the first Sabbath in June. I first made myself acquainted with the general

state of religion in Dublin. I found there were four Presbyterian congregations; two of these belong to the southern presbytery, and are Arians or Socinians; the other two are connected with the northern presbytery, and retain the Westminster confession of faith. One of these latter congregations is very small, and the minister, though orthodox, appears to have but little success. The other is large and flourishing: the place of worship ninety feet by seventy, and, in the morning, well filled. Three times of public service are at half past eleven, and five. In the afternoon, the usual congregations are small indeed; for five o'clock is the dining hour in Dublin, and few of the hearers would leave their dinners for the gospel. Dr. Mc Dowal is the senior pastor of this church, a very affectionate, spiritual man. The junior is Mr. Horner. The doctor is a warm friend of the society, at whose request I went over to Ireland.

"There are one congregation of Burgher Seceders, and another of Antiburghers. The latter will not hear any man who is not of their own cast; the former are much more liberal. I preached for them once, and they affectionately solicited a repetition of my services.

"Lady Huntingdon's connection has one society here, the only one in the kingdom, perhaps, except at Sligo, where there is another. It is not large, and I fear rather declining. There is not one independent church in the kingdom. There were ten Baptist societies in Ireland: they are now reduced to six; and are, I fear still on the decline.

"The inhabitants of Dublin seem to be chiefly composed of two classes; the one assume the appearance of opulence; the other exhibit marks of the most abject poverty: and as there are no parishers in Ireland which provide for the poor, many die every year for the want of the necessaries of life.

"Most of the rich are by profession protestants; the poor are nearly all papists, and strongly prejudiced against the reformed religion. Their ignorance and superstition are scarcely inferior to your miserable Hindoos. On midsummer day I had an effecting proof of the latter. On the public road about a mile from Dublin, is a well, which was once included in the precincts of a priory, dedicated to St. John of Jerusalem. This well is in high repute for curing a number of bodily complaints, and its virtues are said to be most efficacious on the saint's own day. So from twelve o'clock at night, for twenty-four hours, it becomes the rendezvous for all the lame, blind, and otherwise diseased people, within a circuit of twenty miles. Here they brought old

and young, and applied the 'holy water,' both internally and externally; some by pouring, some by immersion, and all by drinking: whilst, for the good of those who could not come in person, their friends filled bottles with the efficacious water to use at home. Several I saw on their knees before the well, at their devotions who were not unfrequently interrupted with a glass of whiskey. With this they were supplied from a number of dealers in that article, who kept standings all around the well.

"Near the spot, was a church-yard, where great numbers kneeled upon the tombs of their deceased relatives, and appeared earnestly engaged in praying for the repose of their souls.

"It was truly a lamentable sight. My heart ached at their delusions, whilst I felt gratitude, I hope unfeigned, for an acquaintance with the water of life, of which if a man drink, he shall live for ever.

"There are few, or none, of the middle class to connect the rich and the poor; so that favorable access to them is far more difficult than to the lower orders of the people in England; and their priests hold them in such bondage, that if a catholic servant only attend on family worship in a protestant house, penance must be performed for the offence. S. P."

Mention has already been made of his having "formed a pleasing acquaintance with several serious young gentlemen of the university of Dublin." The following letter was addressed to one of them, the Rev. Mr. Matthias, a few months after his return:

"DEAR BROTHER MATTHIAS,

"I have been employed this whole day in writing letters to Dublin; and it is the first day I have been able to redeem for that purpose. I will not consume a page in apology. Let it suffice to say, that necessity, not disinclination, has detained from my Irish friends, those proofs of my gratitude and esteem, which in other circumstances I ought to have presented three months ago. I thought this morning of answering all their demands before I slept: but I have written so many sheets, and all full, that I find my eyes and my fingers both fail; and I believe this must close my intercourse with Dublin this day. When I shall be able to complete my purpose, I do not know. To form friendships with good men is pleasant; but to maintain *all that communion*, which friendship expects, is in some cases very difficult. Happy should I be, could I meet my Irish friends in *propria persona*, instead of sitting in solitude, and maintaining, by the tedious medium of the pen, this distant intercourse. But 'The Lord, he

shall choose our inheritance for us.' Were all the planets of our system embodied, and placed in close association, the light would be greater, and the object grander; but then, usefulness and systematic beauty consist in their dispersion: and what are we, my brother, but so many satellites to Jesus the great sun of the Christian system? Some, indeed, like burning Mercuries, keep nearer the luminary, and receive more of its light and heat, whilst others, like the ringed planet, or the Georgium Sidus, preserve a greater distance, and reflect a greater portion of his light: yet if, amidst all this diversity, *they belong to the system*, two things, may be affirmed of all; all keep true to one centre, and borrow whatever light they have from one source. True it is, that the further they are from the sun, the longer are they in performing their revolutions: and is not this exemplified in us? The closer we keep to Jesus, the more brilliant are our graces, the more cheerful and active are our lives; but alas, we are all comets; we all move in eccentric orbs: at one time glowing beneath the ray divine, at another freezing and congealing the icicles. 'Oh what a miracle to man is man!'

"Little did I think when I began this letter, that I should have thus indulged myself in allegory; but true friendship, I believe, always dictates extempore; and my friends must never expect from me a studied epistle. They can meet with better thoughts, than I can furnish them with, in any bookseller's shop. It is not the dish, however well it may be cooked, that gives the relish, but the sweet sauce of friendship, and this I think sometimes makes even nonsense palatable.

"But I have some questions to put to you; first, how are all my college friends, Messrs. Walker, Maturin, Hamilton, &c.? How is their health? But chiefly, how are the interests of religion among you? Are any praying students added to your number? Do all those you thought well of, continue to justify their profession? You know what it is that interests me. Pray tell me all, whether it makes me weep or rejoice.

"I hope Mr. H——'s ministry was blessed in Dublin. Do you know any instances of it? We must sow in hope, and I trust that we shall all gather fruit to eternal life, even where the buddings have never appeared to us in this world. How is it with your own soul? I thank God I never I think, rejoiced habitually so much in him as I have done of late. '*God is love.*' That makes me happy. I rejoice that God reigns; that he reigns over all; that he reigns over me; over my crosses, my comforts, my family, my friends, my senses, my mental powers, my designs, my words, my preaching, my conduct;



that he is *God over all* blessed for ever. I am willing to live, yet I long to die, to be freed from all error and all sin. I have nothing else to trouble me; no other cross to carry. The sun shines without, all day long; but I am sensible of internal darkness. Well, through grace it shall be all light by and by. Yes, you and I shall be angels of light, all Mercuries then; all near the sun; always in motion; always glowing with zeal and flaming with love. Oh for the new heavens and the new world wherein dwelleth righteousness.

“Oh what love and concord there  
And what sweet harmony  
In heaven above, where happy souls  
Adore thy majesty.  
Oh how the heavenly choirs all sing  
To him who sits enthron’d above  
What admiring!  
And aspiring!  
Still desiring:—  
Oh how I long to see this feast of love!”

“Will you tell brother M—— that I wait an opportunity to send a parcel to him? In that I will enclose a letter. My very affectionate respects to him, and Mr. H——, with all my college friends as though named. If you be not weary of such an eccentric correspondent, pray do not be long ere your write to your unworthy, but affectionate brother in Christ, S. P.”

Awhile after this, he thus writes to his friend, Mr. Summers:

“December, 1796. I rejoice that you have been supported under, and brought through your late trials. I do not wonder at it, for it is no more than God has promised; and though we may well wonder that he promises any thing, yet his performance is no just ground of surprise; and when we find ourselves so employed, we had better turn our wonder to our own unbelief, that for one moment suspected God would not be as good as his word.

“I have been lately more than ever delighted with the thought, that God *hath engaged* to do any thing for such worms as we. I never studied the deistical controversy so much, nor ever rejoiced in revelation more. Alas! what should we know, if God had not condescended to teach us. Paul very justly remarks, that no one knoweth any thing of God, but the spirit of God, and he to whom the spirit revealeth him. Now the spirit hath revealed God in the bible, but to an unbeliever the bible is a sealed book. He can know nothing from a book that he looks upon as an imposture, and yet there is no other book in which God is revealed; so that to reject the bible, is to immerse ourselves in darkness, and whilst professing to be wise, actually to become a fool; whereas, no sooner do we believe what the spirit saith, than

unto us is God revealed, and ‘in his light do we see light.’ S. P.”

To the above may be added, a few extracts of letters, which he addressed to his friends in 1797, and 1798.

#### TO DR. RYLAND.

“*March, 1797.*

“During the last three weeks, I have, at times, been very poorly, in colds, &c. Am better now, and have been all along assisted in going through my public duties. Let us continue to pray for each other, till death makes it a needless service. How uncertain is life, and what a blessing is death to a saint! I seem lately to feel a kind of *affection* for death. Methinks if it were visible, I could embrace it. Welcome herald, that bids the prisoner be free; that announces the dawn of everlasting day; that bids the redeemed come to Zion with everlasting joy, to be beyond the reach of an erroneous judgment, and a depraved heart. To believe, to feel, to speak, to act *exactly* as God will have me; to be wholly absorbed and taken up with him; this, this, nothing short of this can make my bliss complete. But *all this is mine*. Oh the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of redeeming love! It conquers my heart, and constrains me to yield myself a living sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

“My dear brother, we have had many happy meetings upon earth: the best is in reserve.

“‘No heart upon earth can conceive  
The bliss that in heaven they share;  
Then, who this dark world would not leave,  
And cheerfully die to be there!’”

“Oh how full of love, and joy, and praise, shall we be when that happy state is ours! Well, yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come. Even so come, Lord Jesus! My dear brother, forgive the hasty effusions of a heart that loves you in the bowels of Jesus, and is always happy in testifying itself to be

“Affectionately yours, S. P.”

#### TO MR. CAVE.

“On the falling away of some who had promised fair in religion.

“———1797.

“I thank you my dear brother, for the confidence you repose in me, the affection you have for me, and the freedom with which you write to me. Assure yourself that I sincerely sympathize in the cutting events which you have lately experienced. Trying indeed! Your heart must bleed. Yet be not discouraged in your work. The more *Satan* opposes *Christ*, the more let us oppose *him*. He comes with great vio-

lence because his time is short. His kingdom is on the decline ; his strong holds are besieged, and he knows they must soon be taken. Whilst it lasts, he is making desperate sallies on the armies of the Lamb. It is no great wonder that he fights and wounds a raw recruit now and then, who strays from the camp, and thoughtless of the danger, keeps not close by the Captain's tent. I hope our glorious Leader will heal the wounded, and secure the captive. He is sure to make reprisals. Christ will have ten to one. You will yet see his arm made bare. He shall go forth like a man of war. The prisoners shall be redeemed, and the old tyrant shall be cast into the bottomless pit. Be of good cheer, my fellow soldier. The cause is not ours, but God's. Let us endure hardness, and still fight the good fight of faith. At last we shall come off conquerors, through Him who hath loved us.

"I hope you have some causes for joy, as well as grief. I trust though one, or two, or three fall, the tens, and the twenties stand their ground. Oh do what you can to cheer them under the common trial. Let them not see a faint heart in *you*. Fight manfully still. Tell them to watch the more ; to pray the harder ; to walk the closer with God. So out of the eater shall come forth meat, and sweetness out of the strong. S. P."

TO MR. BATES AND MRS. BARNES,

Who had been burnt out of their residence.

"The many expressions of Christian friendship which I received from you, and your affectionate families, during my last visit to London, will often excite grateful recollection in future, as they have almost daily since I parted from you ; and though I do not write this avowedly as a mere letter of acknowledgement, yet I wish to assure you, that I am not forgetful of my friends, nor unthankful for their kindness. May all the favor you show to the servants of our common Lord for his sake, be amply recompensed in present peace, and future felicity, when the promise of Him who cannot lie, shall be fulfilled. 'A cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward.'

"But, whilst you, my dear friends, live 'in hope of the glory' that remains 'to be revealed,' I am persuaded that you expect *all* as the fruit of sovereign mercy, which first forms us to the mind of Christ, then accepts, and then rewards. Truly, if sinners be rewarded, it must be 'of grace, and not of debt.' Yet it is a mercy of unspeakable magnitude, that grace should establish a connection, between obedience and enjoyment ; such a connection as at once

insures joy to the believer, and glory to Christ.

"O that our thoughts, our affections, our desires may be much in heaven ! *Here*, you have been taught, is 'no continuing city,' no certain place of abode ; and though you have been taught it awfully in flames, yet if you learn it effectually, the terror of the means will be conquered by the excellency and glory of the consequences. Yes, my friends, 'in heaven we have a better and enduring substance : ' the apartments there are more spacious ; the society more sweet ; the enjoyments more perfect ; and all to last for ever. Well may Christians 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God !'

"S. P."

TO MR. AND MRS. BOWYER, PALL MALL.

"November 17, 1797.

"Blessed be 'the Preserver of men,' for all his goodness to dear Mr. and Mrs. B. With theirs shall my gratitude also ascend, whilst separated from their society ; and with theirs, shall it more warmly and permanently ascend when we meet to form a part of the general assembly, the church of the first born.

"I do not return to London this autumn, but I mean to visit Portsmouth. I must be indebted to you for my directions. We shall be very happy to see you at Luke street : but *Wales* I suppose will be the vortex that will swallow up much of your time. Well, so *you* are happy, we must be disinterested enough to be satisfied, although we be denied a personal participation.

"Let us not forget that we are Christians ; and Christians profess a hope of a better country than *Cambria* contains. *There*, we all belong. Already citizens by privilege, we shall be by possession soon.

"Roll swifter round, ye wheels of time,  
And bring the welcome day."

"In hope of greeting you both in that good land, I remain, most affectionately yours, S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

"November 17, 1797.

"I feel much for you in relation both to the duties and trials of your present situation : at the same time I bless God who fixed you in it, because I am persuaded that it will be for his glory in the churches of Christ. And though none but those, whose hands are full of religious concerns, can guess at your difficulties ; yet our blessed Redeemer knows them all. Oh, my brother, you are travelling for him, who redeemed you by his blood ; who sympathizes with you, and who will graciously



crown you at last. Small as my trials are, I would turn smith, and work at the anvil and the forge, rather than bear them for any other master than *Christ*. Yet were they ten thousand times as many as they are, the thought of their being for him, I trust, would sweeten them all.

"I have reason to be very thankful for much pleasure of late, both as a Christian and a minister. I have never felt so deeply my need of a Divine Redeemer, and seldom possessed such solid confidence that he is mine. I want more and more to become a little child, to dwindle into nothing in my own esteem, to renounce my own wisdom, power and goodness, and simply look to, and live upon Jesus for all. I am ashamed that I have so much pride, so much self-will. Oh my Saviour! make me 'meek and lowly in heart;' in this alone I find 'rest to my soul.'

"I could say much of what Immanuel has done for my soul; but I fear lest even this should savour of vanity. When shall I be like my Lord! Oh welcome death, when I have nothing more to do for Christ! To him, till then, may I live every day and every hour! Rather may I be annihilated than not live to him!

"You will rejoice with me to hear that we have a pleasing prospect as a church. Several very hopeful, and some very valuable characters are about to join us. Lord, carry on thy work. S. P."

#### TO MRS. PEARCE.

On the dangerous illness of one of the children.

"*Portsmouth, January 29, 1798.*

"Ignorant of the circumstances of our dear child, how shall I address myself to her dearer mother! With a fluttering heart, and a trembling hand, I, in this uncertainty, resume my pen. One consideration tranquilizes my mind; I and mine are in the hands of *God*: the wise, the good, the indulgent Parent of mankind! Whatever *he* does is best. I am prepared for all his will, and hope that I shall never have a feeling, whose language is not, 'Thy will be done.'

"I am most kindly entertained here by Mr. and Mrs. Shoveller: and, except my dear Sarah's presence, feel myself at home. They have had greater trials than we can at present know. They have attended seven children to the gloomy tomb: they have been supported beneath their loss, by Him who hath said, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.' Mrs. S. tells me, she 'blessed God for all.' May my dear Sarah be enabled to do the same, whatever the result may prove. To-morrow I expect another letter from you; yet lest you should too much feel my absence, I will not delay forwarding this a single post. O

that it may prove in some degree a messenger of consolation!

"Yesterday I preached three times; God was very good. I received your letter before the first service: you may be assured that I bore you on my heart in the presence of my Lord and yours; nor shall I pray in vain. He will either restore the child, or support you under the loss of it. I dare not pray with importunity for any *earthly good*; for 'who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?' But *strength* to bear the loss of earthly comforts, he has *promised*; for that I importune; and *that*, I doubt not, will be granted.

"In a house directly opposite to the window before which I now write, a *wife*, a *mother*, is just departed. Why am I not a bereaved husband? Why not my children motherless? When we compare our condition with our wishes, we often complain: but if we compare it with that of many around us, our complaints would be exchanged for gratitude and praise.

"S. P."

#### TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

"*February 14, 1798.*

"Not a day has hurried by, since I parted with my dear friends in Pall Mall, but they have been in my affectionate remembrance; but not being able to speak with any satisfaction respecting our dear child, I have withheld myself from imparting new anxieties to bosoms already alive to painful sensibility.

"At length, however, a gracious God puts it in my power to say that there is hope. After languishing between life and death for many days she now seems to amend. We flatter ourselves that she has passed the crisis, and will yet be restored to our arms: but parental fears forbid too strong a confidence. It may be that our most merciful God saw that the shock of a sudden removal would be too strong for the tender feelings of a mother; and so by degrees, prepares for the stroke which must fall at last. However, she is in the best hands, and we are, I hope, preparing for submission to whatever may be the blessed will of God.

"I was brought home in safety, and feel myself in much better health in consequence of my journey. Oh that it all may be concentrated to my Redeemer's praise!

"Happy should I be, if I could oftener enjoy your friendly society; but we must wait for the full accomplishment of our social wishes, till we come to that better world, for which divine grace is preparing us. There our best, our brightest hopes, and there our warmest affections must be

found. Could we have all we want below, we should be reluctant to ascend, when Jesus calls us home. No, this is not our rest; it is polluted with sin, and dashed with sorrow: but though our pains in themselves are evil, yet our God turns the curse into a blessing, and makes all that we meet with accomplish our good.

"What better can I wish, my friends, than the humble place of Mary, or the happy rest of John! Faith can enjoy them both, till actually we fall at the Saviour's feet, and lean upon his bosom, when we see him as he is.

"Oh the delights, the heav'nly joys,  
The glories of the place,  
Where Jesus sheds the brightest beams  
Of his o'erflowing grace."

"S. P."

#### CHAPTER IV.

*An Account of his last Affliction, and the holy and happy Exercises of his Mind under it.*

EARLY in October, 1798, Mr. Pearce attended at the Kettering minister's meeting, and preached from Psalm xc. 16, 17. "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea the work of our hands establish thou it." He was observed to be singularly solemn and affectionate in that discourse. If he had known it to be the last time that he should address his brethren in that part of the country, he could scarcely have felt or spoken in a more interesting manner. It was a discourse full of instruction, full of holy unction, and that seemed to breathe an apostolical ardor. On his return, he preached at Market Harborough; and riding home the next day in company with his friend, Mr. Summers, of London, they were overtaken with rain. Mr. Pearce was wet through his clothes, and towards evening complained of a chillness. A slight hoarseness followed. He preached several times after this, which brought on an inflammation, and issued in a consumption. It is probable that if his constitution had not been previously impaired, such effects might not have followed in this instance. His own ideas on this subject, are expressed in a letter to Dr. Ryland, dated December 4, 1798, and in another to Mr. King, dated from Bristol, on his way to Plymouth, March 30, 1799. In the former, he says: "Ever since my Christmas journey last year to Sheepshead, Nottingham, and Leicester, on the mission business, I have found my constitution greatly

debilitated, in consequence of a cold caught after the unusual exertions which circumstances then demanded; so that from a frame that could endure any weather, I have since been too tender to encounter a single shower without danger; and the duties of the Lord's-day, which as far as bodily strength went, I could perform with little fatigue, have since frequently overcome me. But the severe cold I caught in my return from the last Kettering minister's meeting, has affected me so much, that I have sometimes concluded I must give up preaching entirely; for though my head and spirits are better than for two years past, yet my stomach is so very weak, that I cannot pray in my family without frequent pauses for breath; and in the pulpit it is labor and agony, which must be felt to be conceived of. I have, however, made shift to preach sometimes thrice, but mostly only twice on a Lord's-day, till the last, when the morning sermon only, though I delivered it with great pleasure of mind, and with as much caution as to my voice as possible, yet cost me so much labor as threw me into a fever till the next day, and prevented my sleeping all night." In the letter he writes thus: "Should my life be spared, I and my family, and all my connections will stand indebted, under God, to you. Unsuspecting of danger myself, I believe I should have gone on with my exertions, till the grave had received me. Your attention sent Mr. B. (the apothecary) to me, and then first I learned what I have since been increasingly convinced of: *that I was rapidly destroying the vital principle.* And the kind interest you have taken in my welfare ever since, has often drawn the grateful tear from my eye. May the God of heaven and earth reward your kindness to his unworthy servant, and save you from all the evils from which your distinguished friendship would have saved me."

Such were his ideas. His labors were certainly abundant; perhaps too great for his constitution: but it is probable that nothing was more injurious to his health, than a frequent exposure to night air, and an inattention to the necessity of changing damp clothes.

Hitherto we have seen in Mr. Pearce, the active, assiduous, and laborious servant of Jesus Christ; but now we see him laid aside from his work, wasting away by slow degrees, patiently enduring the will of God, and cheerfully waiting for his dissolution. And as here is but little to narrate, I shall content myself with copying his letters, or extracts from them, to his friends, in the order of time in which they were written, only now and then dropping a few hints to furnish the reader with the occasions of some of them.



## TO DR. RYLAND.

"*Birmingham, October 8, 1798.*

"Oh! my dear brother, your letter of the 5th which I received this morning, has made me thankful for all my pulpit agonies, as they enable me to weep with a weeping brother. They have been of use to me in other respects; particularly, in teaching me the importance of attaining and maintaining that spirituality and pious ardor, in which I have found the most effectual relief; so that, on the whole, I must try to 'glory in tribulations also.' I trust I often can when the conflict is past; but to glory 'in' them, especially in mental distress—*hic labor, hoc opus est.*

"But how often has it been found, that when ministers have felt themselves most embarrassed, the most effectual good has been done to the people. Oh for hearts entirely resigned to the will of God.

"How happy should I be, could I always enjoy the sympathies of a brother, who is tried in these points, as I of late have been.

"S. P."

## TO MR. FULLER.

"*Birmingham, October, 29, 1798.*

"I caught a violent cold in returning from our last committee meeting, from which I have not yet recovered. A little thing now affects my constitution, which I once judged would be weather and labor proof for at least thirty years, if I lived so long. I thank God that I am not debilitated by iniquity. I have lately met with an occurrence, which occasioned me much pain and perplexity. \*\*\*\*\* Trials soften our hearts, and make us more fully prize the dear few, into whose faithful sympathizing bosoms we can with confidence pour our sorrows. I think I should bless God for my afflictions, if they produced no other fruits than these, the tenderness they inspire, and the friendships they enjoy. Pray, my dear brother, for yours affectionately,

"S. P."

To a young man who had applied to him for advice, how he should best improve his time, previous to his going to the Bristol academy.

"*Birmingham, November 13, 1798.*

"MY DEAR M——,

"I can only confess my regret at not replying to yours at a much earlier period, and assure you that the delay has been accidental, and not designed. I feel the importance of your request for advice. I was sensible it deserved some consideration before it was answered. I was full of business at the moment. I put it by, and it was forgotten; and now it is too late. The time of your going to Bristol draws nigh. If instead of an opinion respecting

the best way of occupying your time before you go, you will accept a little counsel during your continuance there, I shall be happy at any time to contribute such a mite as my experience and observation have put in my power.

"At present, the following rules appear of so much moment, that were I to resume a place in any literary establishment, I would religiously adopt them as the standard of my conduct: First, I would cultivate a spirit of habitual devotion. Warm piety connected with my studies, and especially at my entrance upon them, would not only assist me in forming a judgment on their respective importance, and secure the blessing of God upon them; but would so cement the religious feeling with the literary pursuit, as might abide with me for life. The habit of uniting these, being once formed, would, I hope, be never lost; and I am sure that without this, I shall both pursue trivial and unworthy objects, and those that are worthy I shall pursue for a wrong end. Secondly, I would determine on a uniform submission to the instructions of my preceptor, and study those things which would give him pleasure. If he be not wiser than I am, for what purpose do I come under his care? I accepted the pecuniary help of the society on condition of conformity to its will; and it is the society's will that my tutor should govern me. My example will have influence; let me not, by a single act of disobedience, or by a word that implicates dissatisfaction, sow the seeds of discord in the bosoms of my companions. Thirdly, I would pray and strive for the power of self-government, to form no plan, to utter not a word, to take no step under the mere influence of passion. Let my judgment be often asked, and let me always give it time to answer. Let me always guard against a light or trifling spirit; and particularly as I shall be amongst a number of youths, whose years will incline them all to the same frailty. Fourthly, I would in all my weekly and daily pursuits observe the strictest order. Always let me act by a plan. Let every hour have its proper pursuit; from which let nothing but a settled conviction that I can employ it to better advantage, ever cause me to deviate. Let me have fixed time for prayer, meditation, reading languages, correspondence, recreation, sleep, &c. Fifthly, I would not only assign to every hour its proper pursuit, but what I did, I would try to do it with all my might. The hours at such a place are precious beyond conception, till the student enters on life's busy scenes. Let me set the best of my class ever before me, and strive to be better than they. In humility and dili-

gence, let me aim to be the first. Sixthly, I would particularly avoid a *versatile habit*. In all things I would persevere. Without this, I may be a gaudy butterfly, but never, like the bee, will my hive bear examining. Whatever I take in hand, let me first be sure I understand it, then duly consider it, and if it be good, let me adopt and use it.

"To these, my dear brother, let me add three or four things more minute, but which I am persuaded will help you much: *Guard against a large acquaintance while you are a student.* Bristol friendship, while you sustain that character, will prove a vile thief, and rob you of many an invaluable hour. *Get two or three of the students, whose piety you most approve, to meet for one hour in a week for experimental conversation and mutual prayer.* I found this highly beneficial, though strange to tell, by some we were persecuted for our practice! *Keep a diary.* Once a week at farthest, call yourself to an account: What advances you have made in your studies; in divinity, history, languages, natural philosophy, style, arrangement; and amidst all, do not forget to inquire: Am I more fit to serve and to enjoy God than I was last week? S. P."

On December 2, 1798, he delivered his last sermon. The subject was taken from Dan. x. 19. "Oh man, greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my Lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me." "Amongst all the Old Testament saints," said he, in his introduction to that discourse, "there is not one whose virtues were more, and whose imperfections were fewer, than those of Daniel. By the history given of him in this book, which yet seems not to be complete, he appears to have excelled among the excellent." Doubtless no one was farther from his thoughts than himself; several of his friends, however, could not help applying it to him, and that with a painful apprehension of what followed soon after.

#### TO MR. CAVE, LEICESTER.

"Birmingham, December 4, 1798.

"—Blessed be God, my mind is calm; and though my body be weakness itself, my spirits are good, and I can write as well as ever, though I can hardly speak two sentences without a pause. All is well, brother! all is well, for time and eternity. My soul rejoices in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Peace from our dear Lord Jesus be with your spirit, as it is (yea, more also) with your affectionate brother,  
S. P."

#### TO DR. RYLAND.

"Birmingham, December 9, 1798.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"After a Sabbath (such an one I never knew before) spent in an entire seclusion from the house and ordinances of my God, I seek Christian converse with you, in a way in which I am yet permitted to have intercourse with my brethren. The day after I wrote to you last, my medical attendant laid me under the strictest injunctions not to speak again in public for one month at least. He says my stomach has become so irritable, through repeated inflammations, that conversation, unless managed with great caution, would be dangerous; that he does not think my present condition alarming, provided I take rest; but without that, he intimated my life was in great danger. He forbids my exposing myself to the evening air, on any account, and going out of doors, or to the door, unless when the air is dry and clear; so that I am, during the weather we now have in Birmingham, (very foggy,) a complete prisoner; and the repeated cautions from my dear and affectionate friends, whose solicitude, I conceive, far exceeds the danger, compel me to a rigid observance of the doctor's rules.

"This morning brother Pope took my place; and in the afternoon Mr. Brewer, who has discovered uncommon tenderness and respect for me and the people, since he knew my state, preached a very affectionate sermon from 1 Samuel iii. 18. 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' By what I hear, his sympathizing observations, in relation to the event which occasioned his being then in the pulpit, drew more tears from the people's eyes, than a dozen such poor creatures as their pastor could deserve. But I have, blessed be God! long had the satisfaction of finding myself embosomed in friendship—the friendship of the people of my charge: though I lament that their love should occasion them a pang—but thus it is—our heavenly Father sees that, for our mixed characters, a mixed state is best.

"I anticipated a day of gloom, but I had unexpected reason to rejoice that the shadow of death was turned into the joy of the morning; and though I said, with perhaps before unequalled feeling, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles!' yet I found the God of Zion does not neglect the dwellings of Jacob. My poor wife was very much affected at so novel a thing as leaving me behind her, and so it was a dewy morning; but the Sun of Righteousness soon arose, and shed such ineffable delight throughout my soul, that I could say, 'It is good to be here.' Motive to resignation and gratitude



also, crowded upon motive, till my judgment was convinced, that I ought to rejoice in the Lord exceedingly, and so my whole soul took its fill of joy. May I, if it be my Saviour's will, feel as happy when I come to die! When my poor Sarah lay at the point of death, for some days after her first lying-in, towards the latter days, I enjoyed such support, and felt my will so entirely bowed down to that of God, that I said in my heart, 'I shall never fear another trial: he that sustained me amidst this flame, will defend me from every spark!' and this confidence I long enjoyed. But that was near six years ago, and I had almost forgotten the land of the Hermonites, and the hill Mizar. But the Lord has prepared me to receive a fresh display of his fatherly care, and his (shall I call it?) punctilious veracity. If I should be raised up again, I shall be able to preach on the faithfulness of God more experimentally than ever. Perhaps some trial is coming on, and I am to be instrumental in preparing them for it: Or if not, if I am to depart hence to be no more seen, I know the Lord can carry on his work as well without me as with me. He who redeemed the sheep with his blood, will never suffer them to perish for want of shepherding, especially since he himself is the chief Shepherd of souls. But my family! Ah, *there* I find my faith but still imperfect! However, I do not think the Lord will ever take me away, till he helps me to leave my fatherless children in his hands, and trust my widow also with him. 'His love in times past,' and I may add in times *present* too, 'forbids me to think he will leave me at *last*, in trouble to sink.'

"Whilst my weakness was gaining ground, I used to ask myself, how I could like to be laid by? I have dreamed that this was the case, and both awake and asleep, I felt as though it were an evil that could not be borne: but now, I find the Lord can fit the back to the burden, and though I think I love the thought of serving Christ at this moment better than ever, yet he has made me willing to be . . . nothing, if he please to have it so; and now my happy heart 'could sing itself away to everlasting bliss.'

"O what a mercy that I have not brought on my affliction by serving the *devil*. What a mercy that I have so many dear sympathizing friends! What a mercy that I have so much dear domestic comfort! What a mercy that I am in no violent bodily pain! What a mercy that I can read and write, without doing myself an injury! What a mercy that my animal spirits have all the time this has been coming on, (ever since the last Kettering meeting of ministers,) been vigorous—free from dejection! And which I reckon among the greatest of this day's privileges, what a mercy that I have

been able to employ myself for Christ and his dear cause to-day, as I have been almost wholly occupied in the concerns of the (I hope) *reviving* church at Bromsgrove; and the infant church at Cradley! O my dear brother, it is *all* mercy, is it not? O help me then in his praise, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

"Ought I to apologize for this experimental chat with you, who have concerns to transact of so much more importance, than any that are confined to an individual? Forgive me if I have intruded too much on your time, but do not forget to praise on my behalf a faithful God. I shall now leave room against I have some business to write about—till then, adieu—but let us not forget, that *this God, is our God for ever and ever*, and will be our guide even until death. Amen. Amen. We shall soon meet in heaven. S. P."

December 9, 1798, he was detained from public worship, as appears by the preceding letter to Dr. Ryland, written on that day. The following lines seem to have been composed on the same occasion:

"On being prevented by sickness from attending on public worship.

The fabric of nature is fair,  
But fairer the temple of grace;  
To saints 'tis the joy of the earth—  
Oh glorious, beautiful place!

To this temple I once did resort,  
With crowds of the people of God;  
Enraptur'd we entered its courts,  
And hail'd the Redeemer's abode.

The Father of nature we prais'd,  
And prostrated low at his throne;  
The Saviour *we lov'd* and ador'd,  
Who *lov'd us* and made us his own.

Full oft to the message of peace,  
To sinners address'd from the sky,  
We listen'd, extolling that grace,  
Which set us, once rebels, on high.

Faith clave to the crucified Lamb;  
Hope, smiling, exalted its head;  
Love warm'd at the Saviour's dear name,  
And vow'd to observe what he said.

What pleasure appear'd in the looks  
Of brethren and sisters around:  
With transports all seem'd to reflect  
On the blessings in Jesus they'd found.

Sweet moments! If aught upon earth  
Resemble the joys of the skies,  
'Tis thus when the hearts of the flock  
Conjoin'd to the Shepherd arise.

But ah! these sweet moments are fled,  
Pale sickness compels me to stay  
Where no voice of the turtle is heard,  
As the moments are hasting away.

My God! thou art holy and good,  
Thy plans are all righteous and wise;  
Oh help me submissive to wait,  
Till thou biddest thy servant arise.

If to follow thee here in thy courts,  
May it be with all ardor and zeal,  
With success and increasing delight  
Performing the whole of thy will.

Or should thou in bondage detain,  
To visit thy temples no more,  
Prepare me for mansions above  
Where nothing exists to deplore:

Where Jesus, the Sun of the place  
Refulgent incessantly shines,  
Eternally blessing his saints,  
And pouring delight on their minds.

There—there are no prisons to hold  
The captive from tasting delight;  
There—there the day never is clos'd  
With shadows, or darkness, or night.

There myriads and myriads shall meet  
In our Saviour's high praises to join;  
Whilst transported we fall at his feet,  
And extol his redemption divine.

Enough then! my heart shall no more  
Of its present bereavements complain  
Since, ere long, I to glory shall soar,  
And ceaseless enjoyments attain!"

TO MR. NICHOLS, NOTTINGHAM.

*"Birmingham, December 10, 1798.*

"I am now quite laid by from preaching, and am so reduced in my internal strength, that I can hardly converse with a friend for five minutes without losing my breath. Indeed I have been so ill, that I thought the next ascent would be, not to a pulpit, but to a throne, to the throne of glory. Yes, indeed, my friend, the religion of Jesus will support when flesh and heart fail: and in my worst state of body, my soul was filled with joy. I am now getting a little better, though but very slowly. But fast or slow, or as it may, the Lord doth all things well. S. P."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

"—I have overdone myself in preaching. I am now ordered to lie by, and not even to converse, without great care; nor indeed, till to-day, have I for some time been able to utter a sentence, without a painful effort. Blessed be God! I have been filled all through my affliction with peace and joy in believing; and at one time, when I thought I was entering the valley of death, the prospect beyond was so full of glory, that but for the sorrow it would have occasioned to some who would be left behind, I should have longed that moment to have mounted to the skies. Oh my friend, what a mercy that I am not receiving the wages of sin; that my health has not been impaired by vice; but that, on the contrary, I am *bearing in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus*. To him be all the praise! Truly I have proved that God is faithful: and most cheerfully would I take double the affliction for one half of the joy and sweetness which have attended it. Accept a sermon which is this day published.\* S. P."

\* The last but one he ever preached, entitled, *Motives to Gratitude*. It was delivered on a day of national thanksgiving, and printed at the request of his own congregation.

TO MR. BATES AND MRS. BARNES,  
MINORIES.

*"Birmingham, December 14, 1798.*

"—I could tell you much of the Lord's goodness during my affliction. Truly, 'his right hand hath been under my head, and his left embraced me.' And when I was at the worst, especially, and expected ere long to have done with time, even *then*, such holy joy, such ineffable sweetness filled my soul, that I would not have exchanged that situation for any besides heaven itself.

"Oh, my dear friends, let us live to *Christ*, and lay ourselves wholly out for him whilst we live; and then, when health and life forsake us, he will be the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever. S. P."

About this time, the congregation at Cannon street was supplied for several months by Mr. Ward, who is since gone as a missionary to India: here that amiable young man became intimately acquainted with Mr. Pearce, and conceived a most affectionate esteem for him. In a letter to a friend, dated January 5, 1799, he writes as follows:

"I am happy in the company of dear brother Pearce. I have seen more of God in him, than in any other person I ever knew. Oh how happy should I be to live and die with him! When well, he preaches three times on a Lord's-day, and two or three times in the week besides. He instructs the young people in the principles of religion, natural philosophy, astronomy, &c. They have a Benevolent Society, from the funds of which they distribute forty or fifty pounds a year to the poor of the congregation. They have a Sick Society for visiting the afflicted in general: a Book Society at chapel: a Lord's-day School, at which betwixt two and three hundred children are instructed. Add to this, missionary business, visiting the people, an extensive correspondence, two volumes of mission history preparing for the press, &c., and then you will see something of the soul of Pearce. He is every where venerated, though but a young man; and all the kind, tender, gentle affections, make him as a little child at the feet of his Saviour. W. W."

In February, he rode to the opening of a Baptist meeting-house at Bedworth; but did not engage in any of the services. Here several of his brethren saw him for the last time. Soon afterwards, writing to the compiler of these Memoirs, he says, "The Lord's-day after I came home, I tried to speak a little after sermon. It inflamed my lungs afresh, and produced phlegm, coughing, and spitting of blood. Perhaps I may



never preach more. Well, the Lord's will be done. I thank him that ever he took me into his service; and now, if he see fit to give me a discharge, I submit."

During the above meeting, a word was dropped by one of his brethren which he took as a reflection, though nothing was farther from the intention of the speaker. It wrought upon his mind, and in a few days after, he wrote as follows: "Do you remember what passed at B.? Had I not been accustomed to receive *plain, friendly* remarks from you, I should have thought that you meant to insinuate a reproof. If you did, tell me plainly. If you did not, it is all at an end. You will not take my naming it unkind, although I should be mistaken, since affectionate explanations are necessary when suspicions arise, to the preservation of friendship; and I need not say that I hold the preservation of your friendship in no small account."

The above is copied, not only to set forth the spirit and conduct of Mr. Pearce in a case wherein he felt himself aggrieved, but to show in how easy and amiable a manner thousands of mistakes might be rectified, and differences prevented, by a frank and timely explanation.

#### TO MR. COMFIELD, NORTHAMPTON.

*"Birmingham, March 4, 1799.*

"I could wish my sympathies to be as extensive as human—I was going to say—(and why not?) as animal misery. The very limited comprehension of the human intelligence forbids this indeed, and whilst I am attempting to participate as far as the news of affliction reaches me, I find the same events do not often produce equal feelings. We measure our sympathies, not by the causes of sorrow, but by the sensibilities of the sorrowful; hence I abound in feeling on *your* account. The situation of your family must have given distress to a president of any character; but in you it must have produced agonies. I know the tenderness of your heart: your feelings are delicately strong. You must feel much, or nothing; and he that knows you, and does not feel much when you feel must be a brute.

"May the fountain of mercy supply you with the cheering stream! May your sorrow be turned into joy!

"I am sure that I ought to value more than ever your friendship for me. You have remembered me, not merely in my affliction, but in your own. Our friendship, our benevolence must never be compared with that of Jesus; but it is truly delightful to see the disciple treading, though at an humble distance, in the footsteps of a Master, who, amidst the tortures of crucifixion, exercised forgiveness to his murderers. and

the tenderness of filial piety to a disconsolate mother! When we realize the scene, how much do our imaginations embrace—the persons, the circumstances, the words: 'Woman, behold thy son; John, behold thy mother!' S. P."

By the above letter, the reader will perceive, that while deeply afflicted himself he felt in the tenderest manner for the afflictions of others.

#### TO MR. FULLER.

*"March 23, 1799.*

He was now setting out for Plymouth; and after observing the great danger he was supposed to be in, with respect to a consumption, he adds: "But thanks be to God who giveth my heart the victory, let my poor body be consumed, or preserved. In the thought of *leaving*, I feel a momentary gloom; but in the thought of *going*, a heavenly triumph.

*"Oh to grace how great a debtor!"*

"Praise God with me, and for me, my dear brother, and let us not mind dying any more than sleeping. No; no! let every Christian sing the loudest, as he gets the nearest to the presence of his God. Eternally yours in Him, who hath washed us both in his blood. S. P."

#### TO MR. MEDLEY, LONDON.

Under the same date he says: "My affliction has been rendered sweet, by the supports and smiles of Him whom I have served in the gospel of his Son. He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and I trust that he will yet deliver. Living or dying, all is well for ever. Oh what shall I render to the Lord!"

It seems, that in order to avoid wounding Mrs. P's feelings, he deferred the settlement of his affairs till he arrived at Bristol; from whence he wrote to his friend, Mr. King, requesting him to become an executor. Receiving a favorable answer, he replied as follows:

*"Bristol, April 6, 1799.*

"Your letter, just received, affected me too much, with feelings both of sympathy and gratitude, to remain unanswered a single post. Most heartily do I thank you for accepting a service, which friendship alone can render agreeable in the most simple cases. Should that service demand your activities at an early period, may no unforeseen occurrence increase the necessary care! But may the Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widows, send you a recompense into your own bosom, equal to all that friendship, to which, under God, I have been so much indebted in life, and re-

posing on whose bosom, even death itself loses part of its gloom. In you, my children will find another father; in you, my wife another husband. Your tenderness will sympathize with the one, under the most distressing sensibilities; and your prudent counsels be a guide to the others, through the unknown mazes of inexperienced youth. Enough—blessed God! My soul prostrates, and adores thee for such a friend.

S. P.”

#### TO MR. FULLER.

“*Plymouth, April 18, 1799.*

“The last time that I wrote to you was at the close of a letter sent to you by brother Ryland. I did not like that proscript form; it looked so cardlike as to make me fear that you would deem it unbrotherly. After all, perhaps you thought nothing about it; and my anxieties might arise only from my weakness, which seems to be constantly increasing my sensibilities. If ever I felt love in its tenderness for my friends, it has been since my affliction. This, in great measure, is no more than the love of ‘publicans and harlots, who love those that love them.’ I never conceived myself by a hundred degrees so interested in the regards of my friends, as this season of affliction has manifested I was; and therefore, so far from claiming any ‘reward’ for loving them in return, I should account myself a monster of ingratitude, were it otherwise. Yet there is something in affliction itself, which, by increasing the delicacy of our feelings, and detaching our thoughts from the usual round of objects which present themselves to the mind when in a state of health, may be easily conceived to make us susceptible of stronger and more permanent impressions of an affectionate nature.

“I heard at Bristol, that you and your friends had remembered me in your prayers, at Kettering. Whether the Lord whom we serve may see fit to answer your petitions on my account or not, may they at least be returned into your own bosoms.

“For the sake of others, I should be happy could I assure you that my health was improving. As to myself, I thank God that I am not without a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. I find that neither in sickness, nor in health, I can be so much as I wish like him whom I love. ‘To die is gain:’ Oh to gain that state, those feelings, that character, which perfectly accord with the mind of Christ, and are attended with the full persuasion of his complete and everlasting approbation! I want no heaven but this; and to gain this most gladly would I this moment expire. But if to abide in the flesh be more needful for an individual, of my fellow-men, Lord, let thy will be done; only let Christ

be magnified by me, whether in life or death.

“The weather has been so wet and windy since I have been at Plymouth, that I could not reasonably expect to be much better; and I cannot say that I am much worse. All the future is uncertain. Professional men encourage me; but frequent returns appear, and occasional discharges of blood check my expectations. If I speak but for two minutes, my breast feels as sore as though it were scraped with a rough-edged razor; so that I am mute all the day long, and have actually learned to converse with my sister by means of our fingers.

“I thank you for yours of April 4th, which I did not receive till the 12th, the day that I arrived at Plymouth. On the 16th a copy of yours to brother Ryland came to hand, to which I should have replied yesterday, but had not leisure. I am happy and thankful for your success. May the Lord himself pilot the *Criterion* safely to Calcutta river!

“Unless the Lord work a miracle for me, I am sure that I shall not be able to attend the Olney meeting. It is to my feelings a severe anticipation; but how can I be a Christian, and not submit to God?

“S. P.”

#### TO MR. W. WARD.

“*Plymouth, April 22, 1799.*

“Most affectionately do I thank you for your letter, so full of information and of friendship. To our common Friend, who is gone into heaven where he ever sitteth at the right hand of God for us, I commend you. Whether I die, or live, God will take care of you till he has ripened you for the common salvation. Then shall I meet my dear brother Ward again; and who can tell how much more interesting our intercourse in heaven will be made by the scenes that most distress our poor spirits here. Oh, had I none to live for, I had rather die than live, that I may be at once like Him whom I love. But while he insures me grace, why should I regret the delay of glory? No: I will wait his will, who performeth all things for me.

“My dear brother, had I strength, I should rejoice to acquaint you with the wrestlings and the victories, the hopes and the fears, the pleasures and the pangs, which I have lately experienced. But I must forbear. All I can now say is, that God hath done me much good by all, and made me very thankful for all he has done. Alas! I shall see you no more. I cannot be at Olney on the 7th of May. The journey would be my death; but the Lord whom you serve will be with you then, and for ever. My love to all the dear assembled saints, who will give you their benedictions at that solemn season. Ever yours,

“S. P.”



TO MR. KING.

*"Plymouth, April 23, 1799.*

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

"I have the satisfaction to inform you, that at length my complaint appears to be removed, and that I am, by degrees, returning to my usual diet, by which, with the divine blessing, I hope to be again strengthened for the discharge of the duties, and the enjoyment of the pleasures, which await me among the dear people of my charge.

"I am indeed informed by my medical attendant here, that I shall never be equal to the labors of my past years, and that my return to moderate efforts must be made by slow degrees. As the path of duty, I desire to submit; but after so long a suspension from serving the Redeemer in his church, my soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever, and I long to become an apostle to the world. I do not think I ever prized the ministerial work so much as I now do. Two questions have been long before me. The first was, shall I live or die? The second, if I live, how will my life be spent? With regard to the former, my heart answered, 'It is no matter—all is well—for my own sake, I need not be taught that it is best to be with Christ; but for the sake of others, it may be best to abide in the body—I am in the Lord's hands, let him do by me as seemeth him best for me and mine, and for his cause and honor in the world. But as to the second question, I could hardly reconcile myself to the thoughts of living, unless it were to promote the interest of my Lord; and if my disorder should so far weaken me, as to render me incapable of the ministry, nothing then appeared before me but gloom and darkness. However, I will hope in the Lord, that though he hath chastened me sorely, yet, since he hath not given me over unto death, sparing mercy will be followed with strength, that I may show forth his praise in the land of the living.

"I am still exceedingly weak; more so than at any period before I left home, except the first week of my lying by; but I am getting strength, though slowly. It is impossible at present to fix any time for my return. It grieves me that the patience of the dear people should be so long tried, but the trial is as great on my part as it can be on theirs, and we must pity and pray for one another. It is now a task for me to write at all, or this should have been longer.

S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

*"Plymouth, April 24, 1799.*

"VERY DEAR BROTHER,

"My health is in much the same state as when I wrote last, excepting that my mus-

cular strength rather increases, and my powers of speaking seem less and less every week. I have for the most part, spoken only in whispers for several days past; and even these seem too much for my irritable lungs. My father asked me a question to-day; he did not understand me when I whispered; so I was obliged to utter *one word*, and one word *only*, a little louder, and that brought on a soreness, which I expect to feel till bed time.

"I am still looking out for fine weather: all here is cold and rainy. We have had but two or three fair and warm days since I have been here; then I felt better. I am perfectly at a loss even to guess what the Lord means to do with me; but I desire to commit my ways to him, and be at peace. I am going to-day about five miles into the country (to Tamerton,) where I shall await the will of God concerning me.

"I knew not of any Committee-meeting of our society to be held respecting Mr. Marshman and his wife. I have therefore sent no vote, and indeed it is my happiness that I have full confidence in my brethren, at this important crisis, since close thinking or much writing always increases my fever, and promotes my complaint.

"My dear brother, I hope you will correspond much with Kettering. I used to be a medium, but God has put me out of the way. I could weep that I can serve him no more: and yet I fear some would be tears of pride. Oh for perfect likeness to my humble Lord!

S. P."

TO MR. KING.

*"Tamerton, May 2, 1799.*

"— Give my love to all the dear people at Cannon street. Oh pray that He who afflicts, would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the state of suspense in which I have been kept so long, requires much of it; and I often exclaim, ere I am aware, 'Oh my dear people! Oh my dear family! When shall I be restored to you again!' The Lord forgive all the sin of my desires! At times I feel a sweet and perfect calm, and wish ever to live under the influence of a belief in the *goodness* of God, and of all his plans, and all his works.

S. P."

The reader has seen how much he regretted being absent from the solemn designations of the missionaries at Olney. He however addressed the following lines to Mr. Fuller, which were read at the close of that meeting, to the dissolving of nearly the whole assembly in tears:

*"Tamerton, May 2, 1799.*

"— Oh that the Lord, who is unconquered by place or condition, may copiously pour out upon you all the rich effusions of

his Holy Spirit on the approaching day! My most hearty love to each missionary, who may then encircle the throne of grace. Happy men! happy women! you are going to be fellow-laborers with Christ himself! I congratulate, I almost envy you; yet I love you, and can scarcely now forbear dropping a tear of love as each of your names passes across my mind. Oh what promises are yours; and what reward! Surely heaven is filled with double joy, and resounds with unusual acclamations at the arrival of each missionary there. Oh be faithful, my dear brethren, my dear sisters, be faithful unto death, and all this joy is yours! Long as I live, my imagination will be hovering over you in Bengal; and should I die, if separate spirits be allowed a visit to the world they have left, methinks mine would soon be at Mudnabatty, watching your labors, your conflicts, and your pleasures, whilst you are always abounding in the work of the Lord.

S. P."

## TO DR. RYLAND.

*"Plymouth, May 14, 1799.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Yours of the 11th instant I have just received, and thank you for your continued concern for your poor unworthy brother.

"I have suffered much in my health since I wrote to you last by the increase of my feverish complaint, which filled me with heat and horror all night, and in the day sometimes almost suffocated me with the violence of its paroxysms. I am extremely weak, and now that warm weather which I came into Devon to seek, I dread as much as the cold, because it excites the fever. I am happy, however, in the Lord. I have not a wish to live or die, but as he pleases. I truly enjoy the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and would not be without his divine atonement, wherein to rest my soul, for ten thousand worlds. I feel quite weaned from earth, and all things in it. Death has lost its sting, the grave its horrors; and the attractions of heaven, I had almost said, are sometimes violent.

"O! to grace how great a debtor!"

"But I am wearied. May all grace abound towards my dear brother, and his affectionate.

S. P."

## TO MR. POPE.

*"Plymouth, May 24, 1799.*

"I cannot write much—this I believe is the only letter that I have written (except to my wife) since I wrote to you last. My complaint has issued in a confirmed, slow, nervous fever, which has wasted my spirits and strength, and taken a great part of the little flesh I had when in health from me.

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The symptoms have been very threatening, and I have repeatedly thought that let the physician do what he will, he cannot keep me long from those heavenly joys, for which, blessed be God, I have lately been much longing; and were it not for my dear people and family, I should have earnestly prayed for leave to depart and be with Christ, which is so much better than to abide in this vain, suffering, sinning world.

"The doctors, however, now pronounce my case very hopeful—say there is little or no danger—but that all these complaints require a great deal of time to get rid of. I still feel myself on precarious ground, but quite resigned to the will of Him, who, unworthy as I am, continues daily to 'fill my soul with joy and peace in believing.' Yes, my dear friend! now my soul feels the value of a free, full, and everlasting salvation; and what is more, I do enjoy that salvation, while I rest all my hope on the SON of GOD in human nature, dying on the cross for me. To me now, health or sickness, pain or ease, life or death are things indifferent. I feel so happy in being in the hands of Infinite Love, that when the severest strokes are laid upon me, I receive them with pleasure, because they come from my heavenly Father's hand? 'O! to grace how great a debtor,' &c.

S. P."

## TO THE CHURCH IN CANNON STREET.

*"Plymouth, May 31, 1799.*

"To the dear people of my charge, the flock of Christ, assembling in Cannon street, Birmingham—their afflicted but affectionate pastor presents his love in Christ Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep.

"MY DEAREST FRIENDS AND BRETHREN,

"Separated as I have been a long time from you, and during that time of separation, having suffered much both in body and mind, yet my heart has still been with you, participating in your sorrows, uniting in your prayers, and rejoicing with you in the hope of that glory, to which divine faithfulness has engaged to bring us, and for which our heavenly Father, by all his providences, and by every operation of his Holy Spirit, is daily preparing us.

"Never, my dear brethren, did I so much rejoice in our being made 'partakers of the heavenly calling,' as during my late afflictions. The sweet thoughts of glory, where I shall meet my dear Lord Jesus, with all his redeemed ones, perfectly freed from all that sin which now burdens us, and makes us groan from day to day—this transports my soul, whilst out of weakness I am made strong, and at times am enabled to glory even in my bodily infirmities, that the power of Christ, in supporting when flesh and



heart fail, may the more evidently rest upon me. Oh, my dear brethren and sisters! let me, as one alive almost from the dead, let me exhort you to stand fast in that blessed gospel, which for ten years I have now preached among you: the gospel of the grace of God; the gospel of free, full, everlasting salvation, founded on the sufferings and death of God, *manifest in the flesh*. Look much at this all-amazing scene!

“Behold! a God descends and dies,  
To save my soul from gaping hell;”

And then say whether any poor broken-hearted sinner need be afraid to venture his hopes of salvation on such a sacrifice; especially, since He who is thus ‘mighty to save,’ hath said, that ‘whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out.’ You, beloved, who have found the peace-speaking virtue of this blood of atonement, must not be satisfied with what you have already known or enjoyed. The only way to be constantly happy, and constantly prepared for the most awful changes, which we must all experience, is to be constantly *looking and coming* to a dying Saviour; renouncing all our own worthiness; cleaving to the loving Jesus as our all in all; giving up every thing, however valuable to our worldly interests, that clashes with our fidelity to Christ; begging that of his fulness we may receive ‘grace upon grace,’ whilst our faith actually *relies* on his power and faithfulness, for the full accomplishment of every promise in his word that we plead with him, and guarding against every thing that might for a moment bring distance and darkness between your souls, and your precious Lord. If you *thus live*, (and oh that you may daily receive fresh life from Christ so to do!) ‘the peace of God will keep your hearts and minds,’ and you will be filled with ‘joy unspeakable and full of glory.’

“As a *Church*, you cannot conceive what pleasure I have enjoyed in hearing that you are in peace; that you attend prayer-meetings; that you seem to be stirred up of late for the honor and prosperity of religion. Go on in these good ways, my beloved friends, and assuredly the God of peace will be with you. Yea, if after all I should be taken entirely from you, yet God will surely visit you, and never leave you, nor forsake you.

“As to my health, I seem on the whole to be still mending, though but very slowly. The fever troubles me often both by day and night; but my strength increases. I long to see your faces in the flesh; yea, when I thought myself near the gates of the grave, I wished, if it were the Lord’s will, to depart among those whom I so much loved. But I am in good hands, and all must be right.

“I thank both you and the congregation most affectionately, for all the kindness you have shown respecting me and my family, during my absence. The Lord return it a thousand fold! My love to every one, both old and young, rich and poor, as though named. The Lord bless to your edification the occasional ministry which you enjoy. I hope you regularly attend upon it, and keep together, as ‘the horses in Pharaoh’s chariot.’ I pray much for you: pray, still pray for your very affectionate, though unworthy, pastor,  
S. P.”

In a postscript to Mr. King, he says, “I have made an effort to write this letter; my affections would take no denial; but it has brought on the fever.”

It seems to have been about this time that he wrote the following lines, which have appeared in several periodical publications, but with many inaccuracies:

#### HYMN IN A STORM.

“In the floods of tribulation,  
While the billows o’er me roll,  
Jesus whispers consolation,  
And supports my fainting soul:  
Thus the lion yields me honey,  
From the eater food is given;  
Strengthen’d thus, I still press forward,  
Singing as I wade to heaven,—  
Sweet affliction! sweet affliction,  
That brings Jesus to my soul!

‘Mid the gloom the vivid lightnings  
With increased brightness play;  
‘Mid the thornbrake, beauteous flow’rets  
Look more beautiful and gay;  
So, in darkest dispensations,  
Both my faithful Lord appear,  
With his richest consolations,  
To re-animate and cheer.  
Sweet affliction! sweet affliction,  
Thus to bring my Saviour near!

Floods of tribulation heighten,  
Billows still around me roar;  
Those that know not Christ—ye frighten,  
But my soul defies your pow’r.  
In the sacred page recorded,  
Thus his word securely stands,—  
‘Fear not, I’m in trouble near thee,  
Nought shall pluck thee from my hands.’  
Sweet affliction! sweet affliction,  
That to such sweet words lays claim!

All I meet I find assists me  
In my path to heavenly joy,  
Where, though trials now attend me,  
Trials never more annoy:  
Wearing there a weight of glory  
Still the path I’ll ne’er forget;  
But, reflecting how it led me  
To my blessed Saviour’s seat,  
Cry, ‘affliction! sweet affliction!’  
Haste! bring more to Jesus’ feet!”

Towards the latter end of May, when Mr. Ward, and his companions, were just ready to set sail, a consultation concerning Mr. Pearce was held on board the *Criterion*, in which all the missionaries, and some of the members of the Baptist Missionary Society were present. It was well known that he had for several years been engaged in preparing materials for a *History of Missions*, to be comprised in two

volumes octavo: and as the sending of the gospel among the heathens had so deeply occupied his heart, considerable expectations had been formed by religious people, of his producing an interesting work on the subject. The question now was, could not this performance be finished by other hands, and the profits of it be appropriated to the benefit of Mr. Pearce's family? It was admitted by all, that this work would, partly from its own merits, and partly from the great interest which the author justly possessed in the public esteem, be very productive; and that it would be a delicate and proper method of enabling the religious public, by subscribing liberally to it, to afford substantial assistance to the family of this excellent man. The result was, that one of the members of the society addressed a letter to Mr. Pearce's relations, at Plymouth, requesting them to consult him as he should be able to bear it, respecting the state of his manuscripts; and to inquire whether they were in a condition to admit of being finished by another hand; desiring them also to assure him, for his present relief concerning his dear family, that whatever the hand of friendship could effect on their behalf, should be accomplished. The answer, though it left no manner of hope as to the accomplishment of the object, yet is so expressive of the reigning dispositions of the writer's heart, as an affectionate husband, a tender father, a grateful friend, and a sincere Christian, that it cannot be uninteresting to the reader:

*"Tamerton, June 24, 1799.*

"To use the common introduction of 'dear brother,' would fall so far short of my feelings towards a friend, whose uniform conduct has ever laid so great a claim to my affection and gratitude; but whose recent kindness; kindness in *adversity*; kindness to my *wife*; kindness to my *children*; kindness that would go far to 'smooth the bed of death,' has overwhelmed my whole soul in tender thankfulness, and engaged my everlasting esteem. I know not how to begin.... 'Thought is poor, and poor expression.' The *only* thing that lay heavy on my heart, when in the nearest prospect of eternity, was the future situation of my family. I had but a comparatively small portion to leave behind me, and yet that little was the *all* that an amiable woman, delicately brought up, and, through mercy, for the most part comfortably provided for since she entered on domestic life: with five babes to feed, clothe, and educate, had to subsist on. Ah, what a prospect? Hard and long I strove to realize the promises made to the widows and the fatherless; but *these alone* I could not fully rest on and enjoy. For my own part, God was indeed

very gracious. I was willing, I hope, to linger in suffering, if I might thereby most glorify him, and death was an angel whom I longed to come and embrace me, 'cold' as his embraces are. But how could I leave those who were dearest to my heart in the midst of a world, in which, although thousands now professed friendship for me, and on my account, for mine; yet after my decease, would, with few exceptions, soon forget my widow and my children among the crowds of the needy and distressed. It was at this moment of painful sensibility that *your heart* meditated a plan to remove my anxieties; a plan too that would involve much personal labor before it could be accomplished. 'Blessed be God, who put it into thy heart, and blessed be thou.' May the blessing of the widow and the fatherless rest on you and yours for ever. Amen, and Amen!

"You will regret perhaps that I have taken up so much room respecting yourself, but I have scarcely gratified the shadow of my wishes. Excuse then on the one hand, that I have said so much, and accept on the other, what remains unexpressed.

"My affections and desires are among my dear people at Birmingham; and unless I find my strength increase here, I purpose to set out for that place in the course of a fortnight, or at most a month. The journey, performed by short stages may do me good: if not, I expect when the winter comes, to sleep in peace: and it will delight my soul to see them once more before I die. Besides, I have many little arrangements to make among my books and papers, to prevent confusion after my decease. Indeed, till I get home, I cannot fully answer your kind letter; but I fear that my materials consist so much in references, which none but myself would understand, that a second person could not take it up, and prosecute it. I am still equally indebted to you for a proposal so laborious.

"Rejoice with me that the blessed gospel still 'bears my spirits up.' I am become familiar with the thoughts of dying. I have taken my leave often with the world; and thanks be to God, I do it *always* with *tranquility*, and *often* with *rapture*. Oh, what grace, what grace, it was, that ever called me to be a Christian! What would have been my present feelings, if I were going to meet my God with all the filth and load of my sin about me! But God in my nature hath put my sin away, taught me to love him, and long for his appearing. Oh, my dear brother, how consonant is *everlasting praise* with such a great salvation! S. P."

After this another letter was addressed



to Mr. Pearce, informing him more particularly that the above proposal did not originate with an individual, but with several of the brethren who dearly loved him, and had consulted on the business; and that it was no more than an act of justice to one who had spent his life in serving the public; also requesting him to give directions by which his manuscripts might be found and examined, lest he should be taken away before his arrival at Birmingham. To this he answered as follows:

*"Plymouth, July 6, 1799.*

"I need not repeat the growing sense I have of your kindness, and yet I know not how to forbear.

"I cannot direct Mr. K—— to *all* my papers, as many of them are in books from which I was making extracts; and if I could, I am persuaded that they are in a state too confused, incorrect, and unfinished, to suffer you or any other friend to realize your kind intentions.

"I have possessed a tenacious memory. I have begun one part of the history; read the necessary books; reflected; arranged; written, perhaps, the introduction; and then, trusting to my recollection, with the revisal of the books as I should want them, have employed myself in getting materials for another part, &c. Thus, till my illness, the volumes existed in my head; my books were at hand, and I was on the eve of writing them out, when it pleased God to make me pause: and, as close thinking has been strongly forbidden me, I dare say, that were I again restored to health, I should find it necessary to go over much of my former reading to refresh memory.

"It is now Saturday. On Monday next we propose setting out on our return. May the Lord prosper our way! Accept the sincere affection, and the ten thousand thanks, of your brother in the Lord,

"S. P."

As the manuscripts were found to be in such a state, that no person, except the author himself, could finish them, the design was necessarily dropped. The public mind however, was deeply impressed with Mr. Pearce's worth, and that, which the friendship of a few could not effect, has since been amply accomplished by the liberal exertions of many.

TO DR. RYLAND.

*"Birmingham, July 20, 1799.*

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

"Your friendly anxieties on my behalf demand the earliest satisfaction. We had a pleasant ride to Newport on the afternoon we left you, and the next day without much fatigue reached Tewksbury; but

the road was so rough from Tewksbury to Evesham, that it wearied and injured me more than all the jolting we had had before put together. However, we reached Alcester on Wednesday evening, stopped there a day to rest, and last night (Friday) were brought safely hither, blessed be God!

"I find myself getting weaker and weaker, and so my Lord instructs me in his pleasure to remove me soon. You say well, my dear brother, that at such a prospect, I 'cannot complain.' No, blessed be His dear name, who shed his blood for me, he helps me to rejoice, at times with joy unspeakable. Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is all the most guilty, the most wretched can desire. Yes, I taste its sweetness, and enjoy its fulness, with all the gloom of a dying bed before me. And far rather would I be the poor emaciated, and emaciating creature that I am, than be an Emperor, with every earthly good about him . . . but without a God!

"I was delighted the other day, in perusing the Pilgrim's Progress, to observe that when Christian came to the top of the hill Difficulty, he was put to sleep in a chamber called Peace. Why, how good is the Lord of the way to me! said I; I have not reached the summit of the hill yet, but notwithstanding he puts me to sleep in the chamber of Peace *every night*. True, it is often a chamber of *pain*; but let pain be as formidable as it may, it has never yet been able to expel that peace, which the great Guardian of Israel has appointed to keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

"I have been laboring lately to exercise most love to God when I have been suffering most severely: but, what shall I say? Alas! too often the sense of pain absorbs every other thought. Yet there have been seasons when I have been affected with such a delightful sense of the loveliness of God as to ravish my soul, and give predominance to the sacred passion. It was never till to-day that I got any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by *what death* he should glorify God. O what a satisfying thought is it, that God appoints those means of dissolution whereby he gets most glory to himself. It was the very thing I needed; for of all the ways of dying, that which I most dreaded was by a consumption; (in which it is now highly probable my disorder will issue.) But, O my dear Lord, *if by this death* I can most glorify thee, I prefer it to all others, and thank thee that by this means thou art hastening my fuller enjoyment of thee in a purer world.

"A *sinless* state! 'O 'tis a heaven

worth dying for? I cannot realize anything about heaven, but the presence of Christ and his people, and a perfect deliverance from sin, and I want no more; I am sick of sinning; soon I shall be beyond its power. 'O joyful hour! O blessed abode! I shall be near and like my God!' I only thought of filling one side; and now have not left room to thank you and dear Mrs. Ryland for the minute, affectionate, and constant attentions you paid us in Bristol. May the Lord reward you. Our hearty love to all around, till we meet in heaven.

"Eternally yours in Christ, S. P."

TO MR. BIRT.

"*Birmingham, July 26, 1799.*

"It is not with common feelings that I begin a letter to you. Your name brings so many interesting circumstances of my life before me, in which your friendship has been so uniformly and eminently displayed, that now, amidst the imbecilities of sickness, and the serious prospect of another world, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude, whilst it glows with affection; an affection which eternity shall not annihilate, but improve.

"We reached Bristol on the Friday after we parted from you, having suited our progress to my strength and spirits. We staid with Bristol friends, till Monday, when we pursued our journey, and went comfortably on, till the uncommonly rough road from Tewksbury to Evesham quite jaded me; and I have not yet recovered from the excessive fatigue of that miserable ride. At Alcester we rested a day and a half, and, through the abundant goodness of God we safely arrived at Birmingham on Friday evening, the 19th of July.

"I feel an undisturbed tranquility of soul, and am cheerfully waiting the will of God. My voice is gone, so that I cannot whisper without pain; and this circumstance I am at times most ready to complain. For, to see my dear and amiable Sarah look at me, and then at the children, and at length bathe her face in tears, without my being able to say one word of comfort; Oh!!..... Yet the Lord supports me under this also; and I trust will support me to the end. S. P."

TO MR. ROCK.

"*July 28, 1799.*

"—— I am now to all appearance within a few steps of eternity. In Christ I am safe. In him I am happy. I trust we shall meet in heaven. S. P."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

"*Birmingham, August 1, 1799.*

"Much disappointed that I am not re-

leased from this world of sin, and put in possession of the pleasures enjoyed by the spirits of just men made perfect, I once more address my dear fellow heirs of that glory which ere long shall be revealed to us all.

"We returned from Devon last Friday week. I was exceedingly weak, and for several days afterwards got rapidly worse. My friends compelled me to try another physician. I am still told that I shall recover. Be that as it may, I wish to have my own will annihilated, that the will of the Lord may be done. Through his abundant grace, I have been, and still am happy in my soul; and I trust my prevailing desire is, that living or dying I may be the Lord's. S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

"*Birmingham, Aug. 4, 1799.*

"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

"Still, I trust, hastening to the land 'where there shall be no more curse,' I take this opportunity of talking a little with you on the road, for we are fellow-travellers, and a little conversation by the way will not lose me the privilege of getting first to the end of my journey.

"It is seventeen years within about a week since I first actually set out on my pilgrimage; and when I review the many dangers to which, during that time, I have been exposed, I am filled with conviction that I have all along been the care of Omnipotent Love. Ah how many Pliables, and Timorouses, and Talkatives have I seen, while my quivering heart said, 'Alas! I shall soon follow these sons of apostasy, prove a disgrace to religion, and have my portion with hypocrites at last.'

"These fears may have had their uses; may have made me more cautious, more distrustful of myself, and kept me more dependant on the Lord. Thus

"'All that I've met has work'd for my good.'

"With what intricacy, to our view, and yet with what actual skill and goodness, does the Lord draw his plans, and mark out our path! Here we wonder and complain. Soon we shall all agree that it was a right path to the city of habitation; and what we now most deeply regret, shall become the subject of our warmest praises.

"I am afraid to come back again to life. O how many dangers await me! Perhaps I may be overcome of some fleshly lust; perhaps I may get proud and indolent, and be more of the priest than of the evangelist, surely I rejoice in feeling my outward man decay, and having the sentence of death in myself. O what prospects are before me in the blessed world whither I am going! To be holy as God is holy; to have nothing



but holiness in my nature, to be assured without a doubt, and eternally to carry about this assurance with me, that the pure God looks on me with constant complacency, for ever blesses me, and says, as at the first creation, 'It is very good.' I am happy now in hoping in the divine purposes towards me; but I know, and the thought is my constant burden, that the Being I love best, always sees something in me which he *infinitely hates*. 'O wretched, wretched man that I am!' The thought even now makes me weep, and who can help it, that seriously reflects, he never comes to God to pray or praise, but he brings what his God detests along with him; carries it with him wherever he goes, and can never get rid of it as long as he lives? Come, my dear brother! will you not share my joy, and help my praise, that soon I shall leave this body of sin and death behind, to enter on the perfection of my spiritual nature; and patiently to wait till this natural body shall become a spiritual body, and so be a fit vehicle for my immortal and happy spirit?

"But I must forbear; I have been very unwell all day; but this evening God has kindly given me a respite; my fever is low and my spirits are cheerful, so I have indulged myself in unbosoming my feelings to my dear friend. S. P."

#### TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

On his having sent him a print of Mr. Shwartz, the missionary on the Malabar coast.

"*Birmingham, August 16, 1799.*

"On three accounts was your last parcel highly acceptable. It represented a man, whom I have long been in the habit of loving and revering; and whose character and labors I intended, if the Lord had not laid his hand upon me by my present illness, to have presented to the public in Europe, as he himself presented them to the millions of Asia. The execution bearing so strong a likeness to the original, heightened its value. And then, the hand from whence it came, and the friendship it was intended to express, add to its worth.

"S. P."

#### TO MR. FULLER.

"*Birmingham, August 19, 1799.*

"The doctor has been making me worse and weaker for three weeks. In the middle of the last week he spoke confidently of my recovery; but to-day he has seen fit to alter his plans; and if I do not find a speedy alteration for the better, I must have done with all physicians, but him, who 'healeth the broken in heart.'

"For some time after I came home, I was led to believe my case to be consumptive, and then thinking myself of a certainty near

the kingdom of heaven, I rejoiced hourly in the delightful prospect.

"Since then, I have been told that I am not in a dangerous way; and though I give very little credit to such assertions in this case, yet I have found my mind so taken up with earth again, that I seem as though I had another soul. My spiritual pleasures are greatly interrupted, and some of the most plaintive parts of the most plaintive Psalms seem the only true language of my heart. Yet, 'Thy will be done,' I trust prevails; and if it be the Lord's will that I linger long, and suffer much, O let him give me the patience of hope, and still his will be done. I can write no more. This is a whole day's work: for it is only after tea that for a few minutes I can sit up, and attend to any thing. S. P."

From the latter end of August, and all through the month of September, to the tenth of October, *the day on which he died*, he seems to have been unable to write. He did not, however, lose the exercise of his mental powers; and though in the last of the above letters he complains of darkness, it appears that he soon recovered that peace and joy in God, by which his affliction, and even his life were distinguished.

A little before he died, he was visited by Mr. Medley, of London, with whom he had been particularly intimate on his first coming to Birmingham. Mr. Pearce was much affected at the sight of his friend; and continued silently weeping for nearly ten minutes, holding and pressing his hand. After this he spoke, or rather, whispered as follows: "This sick bed is a Bethel to me; it is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. I can scarcely express the pleasures that I have enjoyed in this affliction. The nearer I draw to my dissolution, the happier I am. It scarcely can be called an affliction, it is so counterbalanced with joy. You have lost your pious father; tell me how it was." Here Mr. Medley informed him of particulars. He wept much at the recital, and especially at hearing of his last words, 'Home, Home!' Mr. Medley telling him of some temptations he had lately met with, he charged him to keep near to God. "Keep close to God," said he, "and nothing will hurt you."

The following detached sentences were taken down occasionally by Mrs. Pearce, within four or five weeks of Mr. Pearce's death.

He once said, "I have been in darkness two or three days, crying, O when wilt thou comfort me! but last night the mist was taken from me, and the Lord shone in upon my soul. O that I could but speak, I would tell a world to trust a faithful God. Sweet affliction, now it worketh *glory, glory!*"

Mrs. P. having told him the various exercises of her mind, he replied, "O trust the Lord, if he lifts up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become mole-hills. I feel your situation, I feel your sorrows; but he who takes care of sparrows, will care for you and my dear children."

When scorching with burning fever, he said, "Hot and happy." One Lord's-day morning he said, "Cheer up, my dear, think how much will be said to-day of the faithfulness of God. Though *we* are called to separate, *he* will never separate from you. I wish I could tell the world what a good and gracious God he is. Never need they, who trust in him, be afraid of trials. He has promised to give strength for the day; that is his promise. O what a lovely God! and he is *my* God and *yours*. He will never leave us nor forsake us, no, never! I have been thinking that this and that medicine will do me good, but what have I to do with it? It is in my Jesus' hands; he will do it all, and there I leave it. What a mercy is it, I have a good bed to lie upon; you, my dear Sarah, to wait upon me; and friends to pray for me! O how thankful should I be for all my pains! I want for nothing: all my wishes are anticipated. O I have felt the force of those words of David, 'Unless thy law, (my gracious God!) had been my delight, I should have perished in mine affliction.' Though I am too weak to read it, or hear it, I can think upon it, and O how good it is! I am in the best hands I could be in, in the hands of my dear Lord and Saviour, and he will do all things well. Yes, yes, he cannot do wrong."

One morning Mrs. P. asked him how he felt? "Very ill, but unspeakably happy in the Lord and *my* dear Lord Jesus." Once beholding her grieving, he said, "O my dear Sarah, do not be so anxious, but leave me entirely in the hands of Jesus, and think, if you were as wise as he, you would do the same by me. If he takes me, I shall not be lost, I shall only go a little before; we shall meet again, never to part."

After a violent fit of coughing he said, "It is all well; O what a good God is he! It is done by him, and it must be well; If I ever recover, I shall pity the sick more than ever, and if I do not, I shall go to sing delivering love; so you see it will be all well. O for more patience! Well, my God is the God of patience, and he will give me all I need. I rejoice it is my Jesus' hands to communicate, and it cannot be in better. It is my God who gives me patience to bear all his will."

When after a restless night, Mrs. P. asked him, what she should do for him?

"You can do nothing but pray for me, that I may have patience to bear all my Lord's will." After taking a medicine he said, "If it be the Lord's will to bless it, for your sake, and for the sake of the dear children; but the Lord's will be done. O I fear I sin, I dishonor God by impatience; but I would not for a thousand worlds sin in a thought if I could avoid it." Mrs. P. replied, she trusted the Lord would still keep him; seeing he had brought him thus far, he would not desert him at last. "No, no," he said, "I hope he will not. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Why do I complain? My dear Jesus' sufferings were much sorer and more bitter than mine: *And did he thus suffer, and shall I repine!* No, I will cheerfully suffer my Father's will."

One morning after being asked how he felt, he replied, "I have but one severe pain about me! What a mercy! O how good a God to afford some intervals amidst so much pain! He is altogether good. Jesus lives, my dear, and that must be our consolation." After taking a medicine which operated very powerfully, he said, "This will make me so much lower; well, let it be. Multiply my pains, thou good God; so thou art but glorified, I care not what I suffer; all is right."

Being asked how he felt after a restless night, he replied, "I have so much weakness and pain, I have not had much enjoyment; but I have a full persuasion that the Lord is doing all these well. If it were not for strong confidence in a lovely God, I must sink; but all is well. O blessed God, I would not love thee less; O support a sinking worm! O what a mercy to be assured that all things are working together for good."

Mrs. P. saying, If we must part, I trust the separation will not be for ever; "O no," he replied, "we sorrow not as those who have no hope." She said, Then you can leave me and your dear children with resignation, can you? He answered, "My heart was pierced through with many sorrows, before I could give you and the dear children up; but the Lord has heard me say, Thy will be done; and I now can say blessed be his dear name, I have none of my own."

His last day, Oct. 10 was very happy; Mrs. P. repeated this verse,

Since all that I meet shall work for my good,  
The bitter is sweet, the medicine is food,  
Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long,  
And then, O how pleasant the conqueror's song.

He repeated with an inexpressible smile, the last line "*The conqueror's song.*"

He said once, "O my dear! what shall I do? But why do I complain? He makes



all my bed in my sickness." She then repeated those lines,

"Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are."

"Yes," he replied, "he can; he does; I feel it."

## CHAPTER V.

### *General Outlines of his Character.*

To develop the character of any person, it is necessary to determine what was his governing principle. If this can be clearly ascertained, we will easily account for the tenor of his conduct.

The governing principle in Mr. Pearce, beyond all doubt, was HOLY LOVE.

To mention this is sufficient to prove it to all who knew him. His friends have often compared him to *that disciple whom Jesus loved*. His religion was that of the heart. Almost every thing he saw, or heard, or read, or studied, was converted to the feeding of this divine flame. Every subject that passed through his hands seemed to have been cast into this mould. Things, that to a merely speculative mind would have furnished matter only for curiosity, to him afforded materials for devotion. His sermons were generally the effusions of his heart, and invariably aimed at the hearts of his hearers.

For the justness of the above remarks, I might appeal not only to the letters which he addressed to his friends, but to those which his friends addressed to him. It is worthy of notice how much we are influenced in our correspondence by the turn of mind of the person we address. If we write to a humorous character, we shall generally find that what we write, perhaps without being conscious of it, will be interspersed with pleasantries: or if to one of a very serious cast, our letters will be more serious than usual. On this principle, it has been thought, we may form some judgment of our own spirit by the spirit in which our friends address us. These remarks will apply with singular propriety to the correspondence of Mr. Pearce. In looking over the first volume of *Periodical accounts of the Baptist Mission*, the reader will easily perceive the most affectionate letters from the missionaries are those which are addressed to him.

It is not enough to say of this affectionate spirit, that it formed a prominent feature in his character, it was rather the life-blood that animated the whole system. He seemed, as one of his friends observed, to be baptized in it. It was *holy love* that gave the tone to his general deportment: as a son, a subject, a neighbor, a Christian,

a minister, a pastor, a friend, a husband, and a father, he was manifestly governed by this principle; and this it was that produced in him that lovely uniformity of character, which constitutes the true *beauty of holiness*.

By the grace of God he was what he was; and to the honor of grace, and not for the glory of a sinful worm, be it recorded. Like all other men, he was the subject of a depraved nature. He felt it, and lamented it, and longed to depart, that he might be freed from it: but certainly we have seldom seen a character, taking him altogether, "whose excellencies were so many, and so uniform, and whose imperfections were so few." We have seen men rise high in contemplation, who have abounded but little in action. We have seen zeal mingled with bitterness, and candor degenerate into indifference; experimental religion mixed with a large portion of enthusiasm, and what is called rational religion void of every thing that interests the heart of man. We have seen splendid talents tarnished with insufferable pride, seriousness and melancholy, cheerfulness with levity, and great attainments in religion with uncharitable censoriousness towards men of low degree: but we have not seen these things in our brother Pearce.

There have been few men in whom has been united a greater portion of the contemplative and the active; holy zeal and genuine candor; spirituality and rationality; talents that attracted almost universal applause, and the most unaffected modesty: faithfulness in bearing testimony against evil, with the tenderest compassion to the soul of the evil doer; fortitude that would encounter any difficulty in the way of duty, without any thing boisterous, noisy, or overbearing; deep seriousness, with habitual cheerfulness; and a constant aim to promote the highest degrees of piety in himself and others, with a readiness to hope the best of the lowest; not *breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax*.

*He loved the Divine character as revealed in the scriptures.* To adore God, to contemplate his glorious perfections, to enjoy his favor, and to submit to his disposal, were his highest delight. "I felt," says he, when contemplating the hardships of a missionary life, "that were the universe destroyed, and I the only being in it besides God, he is fully adequate to my complete happiness; and had I been in an African wood, surrounded with venomous serpents, devouring beasts, and savage men, in such a frame, I should be the subject of perfect peace and exalted joy. Yes, O my God! thou hast taught me that *thou alone art* worthy of my confidence; and with this

sentiment fixed in my heart, I am freed from all solicitude about my temporal concerns. If thy presence be enjoyed, poverty shall be riches, darkness light, affliction prosperity, reproach my honor, and fatigue my rest !”

*He loved the Gospel.* The truths which he believed and taught, dwelt richly in him, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The reader will recollect how he went over the great principles of Christianity, examining the grounds on which he rested, in the first of those days which he devoted to solemn fasting and prayer in reference to his becoming a missionary; and with what ardent affection he set his seal anew to every part of divine truth as he went along.

If salvation had been of works, few men, according to our way of estimating characters, had a fairer claim; but, as, he himself has related, he could not meet the king of terrors in this armour. So far was he from placing any dependence on his own works, that the more he did for God, the less he thought of it in such a way. “All the satisfaction I wish for here,” says he, “is to be doing my heavenly Father’s will. I hope I have found it my meat and drink to do his work; and can set to my seal, that the purest pleasures of human life spring from the humble obedience of faith. It is a good saying, ‘We cannot do too much for God, nor trust in what we do too little.’ I find a growing conviction of the necessity of a free salvation. The more I do for God, the less I think of it; and am progressively ashamed that I do no more.”

Christ crucified was his darling theme, from first to last. This was the subject on which he dwelt at the outset of his ministry among the Coldford colliers, when “He could scarcely speak for weeping, nor they hear for interrupting sighs and sobs;” this was the burden of the song when addressing the more polished and crowded audiences at Birmingham, London and Dublin; this was the grand motive exhibited in sermons for the promotion of public charities; and this was the rock on which he rested all his hopes, in the prospect of death. It is true as we have seen, he was shaken for a time by the writings of a *Whitby* and of a *Priestly*; but this transient hesitation, by the overruling grace of God, tended only to establish him more firmly in the end. “Blessed be his dear name,” says he, under his last affliction, “who shed his blood for me. He helps me to rejoice at times with joy unspeakable. Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is all the most guilty and the most wretched can desire. Yes I taste its sweetness and enjoy its fulness,

with all the gloom of a dying bed for me; and far rather would I be the poor emaciated and emaciating creature that I am, than be an emperor with every earthly good about him, but without a God.”

Notwithstanding this, however, there were those in Birmingham, and other places, who could not allow that *he preached the gospel*. And if by the gospel were meant the doctrine taught by Mr. Huntington, Mr. Bradford and others who follow hard after them, it must be granted he did not. If the fall and depravity of man operate to destroy his accountableness to his Creator; if his inability to obey the law, or comply with the gospel, be of such a nature as to excuse him in the neglect of either; or if not, yet, if Christ’s coming under the law frees believers from all obligation to obey its precepts; if gospel invitations are addressed only to the regenerate; if the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit consist in revealing to us the secret purposes of God concerning us, or impressing us with the idea that we are the favorites of Heaven; if believing such impressions be Christian faith, and doubting of their validity unbelief; if there be no such thing as progressive sanctification, nor any sanctification inherent, except that of the illumination before described; if wicked men are not obliged to do any thing beyond what they can find in their hearts to do, nor good men to be holy beyond what they actually are; and if these things constitute the *gospel*, Mr. Pearce certainly *did not* preach it. But if man, whatever be his depravity, be necessarily a free agent, and accountable for all his dispositions and actions; if gospel invitations be addressed to men not as elect, nor as non-elect, but as sinners exposed to the righteous displeasure of God; if Christ’s obedience and death rather increase than diminish our obligations to love God and one another; if faith in Christ be a falling in with God’s way of salvation, and unbelief a falling out with it; if sanctification be a progressive work, and so essential a branch of our salvation, as that without it no man shall see the Lord; if the Holy Spirit instruct us in nothing by his illuminating influences but what was already revealed in the scriptures, and which we should have perceived but for that we loved darkness rather than light; and if he inclines us to nothing but what was antecedently right, or to such a spirit as every intelligent creature ought at all times to have possessed, then Mr. Pearce *did* preach the gospel; and that which his accusers call by this name is *another gospel, and not the gospel of Christ*.

Moreover if the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce be not the gospel of Christ, and that which is taught by the above writers



and their adherents be, it may be expected that the effects produced will in some degree correspond with this representation: and, is it evident to all men who are acquainted with both, and who judge impartially, that the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce is productive of *hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, railings, evil surmises, and perverse disputings*; that it renders those who embrace it *lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, false accusers, fierce, despisers of those that are good*; while that of his adversaries promotes *love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance*? *Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? Ye shall know them by their fruits?*

Mr Pearce's ideas of preaching *human obligation* may be seen in the following extract from a letter addressed to a young minister who was sent out of the church of which he was pastor. "You request my thoughts how a minister should preach *human obligation*. I would reply, do it *extensively*, do it *constantly*; but withal, do it *affectionately* and *evangelically*. I think, considering the general character of our hearers, and the state of their mental improvement, it would be time lost to argue much from the data of natural religion. The best way is, perhaps, to express duties in scripture language, and enforce them by evangelical motives; as, the example of Christ—the ends of his suffering and death, the consciousness of his approbation—the assistance he has promised—the influence of a holy conversation on God's people, and on the people of the world—the small returns we at best can make for the love of Jesus—and the hope of eternal holiness. These form a body of arguments, which the most simple may understand, and the most dull may feel. Yet I would not neglect on *some occasions* to show the obligations of man to love his Creator—the reasonableness of the divine law—and the natural tendency of its commands to promote our own comfort, the good of society, and the glory of God. These will serve to *illuminate*, but, after all, it is the *gospel of the grace of God* that will most effectually *animate* and impel to action."

Mr. Pearce's affection to the doctrine of the cross was not merely nor principally on account of its being a system which secured his own safety. Had this been the case, he might, like others, whose religion originates and terminates in self-love, have been delighted with the idea of the grace of the Son, but it would have been at the expense of all complacency in the righteous government of the Father. He might have admired something which he accounted the gospel, as saving him from misery; but he could have discerned no loveliness

in the divine law as being holy, just and good, nor in the mediation of Christ as doing honor to it. That which in his view constituted the glory of the gospel was, that God is therein revealed as *the just God and the Saviour—just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*

*He was a lover of good men.* He was never more in his element than when joining with them in spiritual conversation, prayer and praise. His heart was tenderly attached to the people of his charge; and it was one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup during his long affliction, to be cut off from their society. When in the neighborhood of Plymouth, he thus writes to Mr. King, one of the deacons—"Give my love to all the dear people. O pray that he who afflicts would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the state of suspense in which I have been kept so long, requires much of it; and I often exclaim, ere I am aware, O my dear people! O my dear family, when shall I return to you again!" He conscientiously dissented from the Church of England, and from every other national establishment of religion, as inconsistent with what he judged the scriptural account of the nature of Christ's kingdom; nor was he less conscientious in his rejection of infant baptism, considering it as having no foundation in the holy scriptures, and as tending to confound the church and the world; yet he embraced with brotherly affection great numbers of godly men both in and out of the establishment. His spirit was truly catholic: he loved all who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. "Let us pray," said he in a letter to a friend, "for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper who love—not this part, or the other, but who love—*HER*—that is, the whole body of Christ."

*He bore good will to all mankind.* It was from this principle that he so ardently desired to go and preach the gospel to the heathen. And even under his long affliction, when at times he entertained hopes of recovery, he would say, "My soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever: I long to become an apostle to the world!" The errors and sins of men wrought much in him in a way of pity. He knew that they were culpable in the sight of God: but he knew also that he himself was a sinner, and felt that they were entitled to his compassion. His zeal for the divinity and atonement of his Saviour, never appeared to have operated in a way of unchristian bitterness against those who rejected these important doctrines; and though he was shamefully traduced by professors of another description as a mere legal preacher, and his ministry held up as affording no food for the souls of believers, and could not but feel

the injury of such misrepresentations; yet he does not appear to have cherished unchristian resentment; but would at any time have laid himself out for the good of his worst enemies. It was his constant endeavor to promote as good an understanding between the different congregations in the town as the nature of their different religious sentiments would admit. The cruel bitterness of many people against Dr. Priestley and his friends, at and after the Birmingham riots, was affecting to his mind. Such methods of opposing error he abhorred. His regard to mankind made him lament the consequences of war: but while he wished and prayed for peace to the nations, and especially to his native country, he had no idea of turbulently contending for it. Though friendly to civil and religious liberty, he stood aloof from the fire of political contention. In an excellent circular letter to the churches of the Midland association in 1794, of which he was the writer, he thus expresses himself: "Have as little as possible to do with the world. Meddle not with political controversies. An inordinate pursuit of these, we are sorry to observe, has been as a canker-worm at the root of vital piety; and caused the love of many, formerly zealous professors, to wax cold. The Lord reigneth, it is our place to rejoice in his government, and quietly wait for the salvation of God. The establishment of his kingdom will be the ultimate end of all those national commotions which terrify the earth. The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." If he could write in this manner in 1794, his seeing a hopeful undertaking, in which he had taken a more than common interest, blasted by this species of folly in 1796, would not lessen his aversion to it. From this time more than ever he turned his whole attention to the promoting of the kingdom of Christ, cherishing and recommending a spirit of contentment and gratitude for the civil and religious advantages that we enjoyed. Such were the sentiments inculcated in the last sermon that he printed, and the last but one that he preached. (See Note at page 373.) His dear young friends who are gone to India will never forget how earnestly he charged them by letter, when confined at Plymouth, to conduct themselves in all civil matters as peaceable and obedient subjects to the government under which they lived, in whatever country it might be their lot to reside.

*It was love that tempered his faithfulness with so large a portion of tender concern for the good of those whose conduct he was obliged to censure.* He could not bear them that were evil, but would set himself against them with the greatest firmness; yet it was

easy to discover the pain of mind with which this necessary part of duty was discharged. It is well remembered how he conducted himself towards certain preachers, in the neighborhood, who, wandering from place to place, corrupted and embroiled the churches; whose conduct he knew to be as dishonorable as their principles were loose and unscriptural: and when requested to recite particulars in his own defence, his fear and tenderness for character, his modest reluctance to accuse persons older than himself, and his deep concern that men engaged in the Christian ministry, should render such accusations necessary, were each conspicuous, and proved to all present, that the work of an accuser was to him a *strange work*.

*It was love that expanded his heart, and prompted him to labor in season and out of season for the salvation of sinners.* This was the spring of that constant stream of activity by which his life was distinguished. His conscience would not suffer him to decline what appeared to be right. "I dare not refuse," he would say, "lest I should shrink from duty. Unjustifiable ease is worse than the most difficult labors to which duty calls." To persons who never entered into his views and feelings, some parts of his conduct, especially those which relate to his desire of quitting his country that he might preach the gospel to the heathen, will appear extravagant: but no man could with greater propriety have adopted the language of the apostle, *Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober it is for your cause; for the love of Christ constraineth us.*

He was frequently told that his exercises were too great for his strength; but such was the ardor of his heart, "He could not die in a better work." When he went up into the pulpit to deliver his last sermon, he thought he should not have been able to get through, but when he got a little warm, he felt relieved, and forgot his indisposition, preaching with equal fervor and freedom as when in perfect health. While he was laid aside, he could not forbear hoping that he should some time resume his delightful work; and knowing the strength of his feelings to be such that it would be unsafe to trust himself, he proposed for a time to write his discourses, that his mind might not be at liberty to overdo his debilitated frame.

*All his counsels, cautions, and reproofs, appear to have been the effect of love.* It was a rule dictated by his heart, no less than by his judgment, to discourage all evil speaking: nor would he approve of just censure unless some good and necessary end were to be answered by it. Two of his distant friends being at his house together, one of them, during the absence of



the other, suggested something to his disadvantage. He put a stop to the conversation by answering. "He is here, take him aside and tell him of it by himself: you may do him good."

If he perceived any of his acquaintance bewildered in fruitless speculations, he would in an affectionate manner endeavor to draw off their attention from these mazes of confusion to the simple doctrine of the cross. A specimen of this kind of treatment will be seen in the letter, No. I. towards the close of this chapter.

He was affectionate to all, but especially towards the *rising generation*. The youth of his own congregation, of London and of Dublin, have not forgotten his melting discourses which were particularly addressed to them. He took much delight in speaking to the children, and would adapt himself to their capacities, and expostulate with them on the things which belonged to their everlasting peace. While at Plymouth he wrote thus to one of his friends, "O how should I rejoice were there a speedy prospect of my returning to my great and *little* congregations." Nor was it by preaching only that he sought their eternal welfare: several of his letters are addressed to young persons.—See Nos. II. and III. towards the close of this chapter.

With what joy did he congratulate one of his most intimate friends, on hearing that three of the younger branches of his family had apparently been brought to take the Redeemer's yoke upon them. "Thanks, thanks, thanks be to God," said he, "for the enrapturing prospects before you as a *father*, as a *Christian father* especially. What, *three* of a family! and these three at once! O the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, of his unfathomable grace. My soul feels joy unspeakable at the blessed news. Three immortal souls secured for eternal life! Three rational spirits preparing to grace Immanuel's triumphs, and sing his praise! Three examples of virtue and goodness; exhibiting the genuine influences of the true religion of Jesus before the world—Perhaps three mothers training up to lead three future families in the way to heaven. O what a train of blessings do I see in this event! Most sincerely do I participate with my dear friend, in his pleasures and in his gratitude."

Towards the close of life, writing to the same friend, he thus concludes his letter: "Present our love to dear Mrs. S. and the family, especially those whose hearts are engaged to seek the Lord and his goodness. O tell them they will find him good all their lives, supremely good on dying beds, but best of all in glory."

*In his visits to the sick* he was singularly useful. His sympathetic conversation, affectionate prayers, and endearing manner of recommending to them a compassionate Saviour, frequently operated as a cordial to their troubled hearts. A young man of his congregation was dangerously ill. His father, living at a distance, was anxious to hear from him; and Mr. Pearce, in a letter to the minister on whose preaching the father attended, wrote as follows: "I feel for the anxiety of Mr. V. and am happy in being at this time a Barnabas to him. I was not seriously alarmed for his son till last Tuesday, when I expected from every symptom, and the language of his apothecary, that he was nigh unto death. But to our astonishment and joy, a surprising change has since taken place. I saw him yesterday apparently in a fair way for recovery. His mind for the first part of his illness, was sometimes joyful, and almost constantly calm; but when at the worst, suspicions crowded his mind; he feared he had been a hypocrite. I talked, and prayed, and wept with him. One scene was very affecting both he and his wife appeared like persons newly awakened. They never felt *so strongly* the importance of religion before. He conversed about the tenderness of Jesus to broken-hearted sinners; and whilst we spoke, it seemed as though he came and began to heal the wound. It did me good, and I trust was not unavailing to them. They have since been for the most part happy; and a very pleasant interview I had with them on the past day."

Every man must have his seasons of relaxation. In his earlier years he would take strong bodily exercise. Of late, he occasionally employed himself with the microscope and in making a few philosophical experiments. "We will amuse ourselves with philosophy," said he to a philosophical friend "but Jesus shall be our teacher." In all these exercises he seems never to have lost sight of God; but would be discovering something in his works that should furnish matter for praise and admiration. His mind did not appear to have been unfitted, but rather assisted, by such pursuits for the discharge of the more spiritual exercises, into which he would fall at a proper season, as into his native element. If in company with friends, and the conversation turned upon the works of nature, or art, or any other subject of science, he would cheerfully take a part in it, and when occasion required, by some easy and pleasant transition, direct it into another channel. An ingenious friend once showed him a model of a machine which he thought of constructing, and by which he hoped to be able to produce a perpetual motion. Mr. Pearce having pa-

tiently inspected it, discovered where the operation would stop, and pointed it out. His friend was convinced, and felt, as may be supposed, rather unpleasant at his disappointment. He consoled him; and a prayer-meeting being at hand, said to this effect, "We may learn from hence our own insufficiency, and the glory of that Being, who is *wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working*: let us go and worship him."

His mild and gentle disposition, not apt to give or take offence, often won upon persons in matters wherein at first they have shown themselves averse. When collecting for the Baptist mission, a gentleman who had no knowledge of him, or of the conductors of that undertaking, made some objections, on the ground that the Baptists had little or nothing to say to the unconverted. This objection Mr. Pearce attempted to remove, by alleging that the parties concerned in this business were entirely of another mind. I am glad to hear it, said the gentleman, but I have my fears. Then pray, sir, said Mr. Pearce, do not give till you are satisfied. Why, I assure you, replied the other, I think the Methodists more likely to succeed than you; and should feel more pleasure in giving them ten guineas than you one. If you give them twenty guineas, sir, said Mr. Pearce we shall rejoice in their success; and if you give us one, I hope it will not be misapplied. The gentleman smiled, and gave him four.

His figure to a superficial observer would at first sight convey nothing very interesting; but on close inspection, his countenance would be acknowledged to be a faithful index to his soul. Calm, placid, and when in the pulpit especially, full of animation, his appearance was not a little expressive of the interest he felt in the eternal welfare of his audience; his eyes beaming benignity, and speaking in the most impressive language his willingness to impart, *not only the gospel of God, but his own soul also*.

His imagination was vivid, and his judgment clear; he relished the elegancies of science, and felt alive to the most delicate and refined sentiments; yet these were things on account of which he does not appear to have valued himself. They were rather his amusements than his employment.

His address was easy and insinuating; his voice pleasant, but sometimes overstrained in the course of his sermon; his language chaste, flowing, and inclining to the florid: this last, however, abated as his judgment ripened. His delivery was rather slow than rapid; his attitude graceful, and his countenance in almost all his discourses

approaching to an affectionate smile. He never appears, however, to have studied what are called the graces of pulpit action; or, whatever he had read concerning them, it was manifest that he thought nothing of them, or of any other of the ornaments of speech, at the time. Both his action and language were the genuine expressions of an ardent mind, affected, and sometimes deeply, with his subject. Being rather below the common stature, and disregarding, or rather, I might say, disapproving every thing pompous in his appearance, he has on some occasions been prejudged to his disadvantage: but the song of the night-gale is not the less melodious for his not appearing in a gaudy plumage. His manner of preparing for the pulpit may be seen in a letter addressed to Mr. C——, of L——, who was sent out of his church: and which may be of use to others in a similar situation. See No. IV. towards the close of this chapter.

His ministry was highly acceptable to persons of education: but he appears to have been most in his element when preaching to the poor. The feelings which he himself expresses when instructing the colliers, appear to have continued with him through life. It was his delight to carry the glad tidings of salvation into the villages wherever he could find access and opportunity. And as he sought the good of their souls, so he both labored and suffered to relieve their temporal wants; living himself in a style of frugality and self-denial, that he might have whereof to give to them that needed.

Finally, *he possessed a large portion of real happiness*. There are few characters whose enjoyments, both natural and spiritual, have risen to so great a height. He dwelt in love: and *he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*. Such a life must needs be happy. If his religion had originated and terminated in self-love, as some contend the whole of religion does, his joys had been not only of a different nature, but far less extensive than they were. His interest was bound up with that of his Lord and Saviour. Its afflictions were his affliction, and its joys his joy. The grand object of his desire was, *to see the good of God's chosen, to rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and to glory with his inheritance*. "What pleasures do those lose," says he, "who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause!"\*

If an object of joy presented itself to his mind, he would delight in multiplying it by its probable or possible consequences. Thus it was, as we have seen, in his con-

\* See the Letter to Dr. Ryland, May 30, 1796, p. 359.



gratulating his friend on the conversion of three of his children; and thus it was when speaking of a people who divided into two congregations, not from discord, but from an increase of numbers; and who generously united in erecting a new and additional place of worship. "These liberal souls are subscribing," said he, "in order to support a religion, which, as far as it truly prevails, will render others as liberal as themselves."

His heart was so much formed for social enjoyment that he seems to have contemplated the heavenly state under this idea with peculiar advantage. This was the leading theme of a discourse from Rev. v. 9—12, which he delivered at a meeting of ministers at Arnsby, April 18, 1797; and of which his brethren retain a lively remembrance. On this pleasing subject he dwells also in a letter to his dear friend Birt. "I had much pleasure a few days since, in meditating on the affectionate language of our Lord to his sorrowful disciples: *I go to prepare a place for you*. What a plentitude of consolation do these words contain; what a sweet view of heaven as a place of society. It is *one place* for us all: that place where his glorified body is, there all his followers shall assemble, to part no more. Where he is, there we shall be also. Oh blessed anticipation! There shall be Abel, and all the martyrs; Abraham, and all the patriarchs; Isaiah and all the prophets; Paul, and all the apostles; Gabriel, and all the angels; and above all, Jesus, and all his ransomed people! Oh to be amongst the number! My dear brother, let us be strong in the Lord. Let us realize the bliss before us. Let our faith bring heaven itself near, and feast, and live upon the scene. Oh what a commanding influence would it have upon our thoughts, passions, comforts, sorrows, words, ministry, prayers, praises, and conduct. What manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness!"

In many persons, the pleasures imparted by religion are counteracted by a gloomy constitution: but it was not so in him. In his disposition they met with a friendly soil. Cheerfulness was as natural to him as breathing; and this spirit, sanctified by the grace of God, gave a tincture to all his thoughts, conversation, and preaching. He was seldom heard without tears; but they were frequently tears of pleasure. No levity, no attempts at wit, no aiming to excite the risibility of an audience, ever disgraced his sermons. Religion in him was habitual seriousness, mingled with sacred pleasure, frequently rising into sublime delight, and occasionally overflowing with transporting joy.

## LETTERS REFERRED TO IN THIS CHAPTER.

### NO. I.

To a young man whose mind he perceived was bewildered with fruitless speculations.

"The conversation we had on our way to —, so far interested me in your religious feelings, that I find it impossible to satisfy my mind, till I have expressed my ardent wishes for the happy termination of your late exercises, and contributed my mite to the promotion of your joy in the Lord. A disposition more or less to "scepticism" I believe is common to our nature, in proportion as opposite systems, and jarring opinions, each supported by a plausibility of argument, are presented to our minds; and with some qualification I admit Robinson's remark, "that he who never doubted, never believed." While examining the grounds of persuasion, it is right for the mind to hesitate. Opinions ought not to be prejudged any more than criminals. Every objection ought to have its weight; and the more numerous and forcible objections are, the more cause shall we finally have for the triumph: '*Manga est veritas et prevalebit*'; but there are two or three considerations, which have no small weight with me in relation to religious controversies.

"The first is, the importance of truth. It would be endless to write on truth in general. I confine my views to what I deem the leading truth in the New Testament: *The atonement made on behalf of sinners by the Son of God; the doctrine of the cross; Jesus Christ and him crucified*. It surely cannot be a matter of small concern whether the Creator of all things, out of mere love to rebellious men, exchanged a throne for a cross, and thereby reconciled a ruined world to God. If this be not true, how can we respect the bible as an inspired book, which so plainly attributes our salvation to the grace of God, *through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*? And if we discard the bible, what can we do with prophecies, miracles, and all the power of evidence, on which, as on adamantine pillars, its authority abides! Surely the infidel has more to reject than the believer to embrace. That book, then, which we receive, not as the word of man, but as the word of God, not as the religion of our ancestors, but on the invincible conviction which attends an impartial investigation of its evidences; that book reveals a truth of the highest importance to man, consonant to the opinions of the earliest ages, and the most enlightened nations, perfectly consistent with the Jewish economy, as to its spirit and design, altogether

adapted to unite the equitable and merciful perfections of the Deity in the sinner's salvation, and above all things calculated to beget the most established peace, to inspire with the liveliest hope, and to engage the heart and life in habitual devotedness to the interest of morality and piety. Such a doctrine I cannot but venerate; and to the *Author* of such a doctrine, my whole soul labors to exhaust itself in praise.

“Oh the sweet wonders of the cross,  
Where God my Saviour, lov'd and died!”

Forgive, my friend, forgive the transport of a soul compelled to feel where it attempts only to explore. I cannot on *this* subject control my passions by the laws of logic. *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

“Secondly, I consider man as a depraved creature; so depraved, that his judgment is as dark as his appetites are sensual: wholly dependent therefore on God for religious light, as well as true devotion; yet such a dupe to pride, as to reject every thing, which the narrow limits of his comprehension cannot embrace; and such a slave to his passions as to admit no law but self-interest for his government. With these views of human nature, I am persuaded we ought to suspect our own decisions whenever they oppose truths too sublime for our understandings, or too pure for our lusts. ‘To err’ on this side, indeed, ‘is human;’ wherefore the wise man saith, ‘He that trusteth to his own heart is a fool.’ Should, therefore, the evidence be only equal on the one side of the gospel of Christ, I should think, with this allowance, we should do well to admit it.

“Thirdly, if the gospel of Christ be true, it should be heartily embraced. We should yield ourselves to its influence without reserve. We must come to a point, and resolve to be either infidels or Christians. To know the power of the sun, we should expose ourselves to his rays; to know the sweetness of honey, we must bring it to our palates. Speculations will not do in either of these cases; much less will it in matters of religion. *My son*, saith God, *give me thine heart.*

“Fourthly, an humble admission of the light we already have, is the most effectual way to a full conviction of the truth of the doctrine of Christ. *If any man will do his will, he shall know of his doctrine whether it be of God.* If we honor God as far as we know his will, he will honor us with further discoveries of it. Thus shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; thus, thus shall you, my dear friend, become assured that there is salvation in no other name than that of Jesus Christ; and thus from an inward experience of the quickening influences of his Holy Spirit,

you will join the admiring church, and say of Jesus, ‘This is my beloved, this is my friend; he is the chiefest among ten thousand, he is altogether lovely.’ Yes, I yet hope, I expect to see you rejoicing in Christ Jesus; and appearing as a living witness that he is faithful who hath said, ‘Seek and ye shall find; ask and receive, that your joy may be full.’ S. P.”

In another letter to the same correspondent, after congratulating himself that he had discovered such a mode of killing noxious insects as should put them to the least pain, and which was characteristic of the tenderness of his heart, he proceeds as follows: “But enough of nature: how is my brother as a Christian? We have had some interesting moments in conversation on the methods of grace, that grace whose influence reaches to the day of adversity, and the hour of death; seasons when, of every thing beside it may be said, Miserable comforters are they all! My dear friend, we will amuse ourselves with philosophy, but Christ shall be our teacher; Christ shall be our glory; Christ shall be our portion. Oh that we may be enabled ‘to comprehend the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge!’

“Affectionately yours,

S. P.”

#### NO. II.

To a young gentleman of his acquaintance, who was then studying physic at Edinburgh.

“Did my dear friend P—— know with what sincere affection, and serious concern, I almost daily think of him, he would need no other evidence of the effect which his last visit, and his subsequent letters have produced. Indeed there is not a young man in the world, in earlier life than myself, for whose universal prosperity I am so deeply interested. Many circumstances I can trace, on a review of the past fourteen years, which have contributed to beget and augment affection and esteem: and I can assure you that *every interview*, and *every letter*, still tend to consolidate my regard.

“Happy should I be, if my ability to serve you at this important crisis of human life were equal to your wishes or my own. Your situation demands all the aid, which the wisdom and prudence of your friends can afford, that you may be directed not only to the most worthy objects of pursuit, but also to the most effectual means for obtaining them. In your professional character it is impossible for me to give you any assistance. If any general observations I can make should prove at all useful, I shall be richly rewarded for the time I employ in their communication.

“I thank you sincerely for the freedom



wherewith you have disclosed the peculiarities of your situation, and the views and resolutions wherewith they have inspired you. I can recommend nothing better, my dear friend, than a *determined adherence* to the purposes you have already formed, respecting the intimacies you contract, and the societies you choose. In such a place as Edinburgh, it may be supposed, no description of persons will be wanting. Some so notoriously vicious, that their atrocity of character will have no small tendency to confirm your morals, from the odious contrast which their practices present to your view. Against these, therefore, I need not caution you. You will flee them as so many serpents, in whose breath is venom and destruction. More danger may be apprehended from those mixed characters, who blend the profession of philosophical refinement with the secret indulgence of those sensual gratifications, which at once exhaust the pocket, destroy the health, and debase the character.

"That morality is friendly to individual happiness, and to social order, no man, who respects his own conscience or character, will have the effrontery to deny. Its avenues cannot, therefore, be too sacredly guarded, nor those principles which support a virtuous practice be too seriously maintained. But morality derives, it is true, its best, its only support, from the principles of religion. 'The fear of the Lord (said the wise man) is to hate evil.' He, therefore, who endeavors to weaken the sanctions of religion, to induce a skeptical habit, to detach my thoughts from an *ever present God*, and my hopes from a futurity of holy enjoyment, HE is a worse enemy than the man that meets me with a pistol and the dagger. Should my dear friend, then, fall into the company of those, whose friendship cannot be purchased but by the sacrifice of Revelation, I hope he will ever think such a price too great for the good opinion of men who blaspheme piety, and dishonor God. Deism is indeed the fashion of the day; and to be in the mode, you must quit the good old path of devotion as too antiquated for any but monks and hermits; so as you laugh at religion, that is enough to secure to you the company, and the applause of the sons of politeness. Oh that God may be a buckler and a shield to defend you from their assaults! Let but their private morals be inquired into, and if they may have a hearing, I dare engage they will not bear a favorable testimony to the good tendency of skepticism; and it may be regarded as an indisputable axiom, That what is unfriendly to virtue is unfriendly to man.

"Were I to argue a *posteriori* in favor of truth, I should contend that those principles must be true, which (first) corres-

ponded with general observation; (secondly) tended to general happiness; (thirdly) preserved a uniform connection between cause and effect, evil and remedy, in all situations.

"I would then apply these data to the principles held, on the one side, by the deists; and on the other by the believers in revelation. In the application of the *first*, I would refer to the state of human nature. The deist contends for its purity and powers. Revelation declares its depravity and weakness. I compare these opposite declarations with the facts that fall under constant observation. Do I not see that there is a larger portion of vice in the world, than of virtue: that no man needs solicitation to evil, but every man a guard against it; and that thousands bewail their subjection to lusts, which they have not power to subdue, whilst they live in moral slavery, and cannot burst the chain? Which principle then shall I admit? Will observation countenance the *deistical*? I am convinced to the contrary, and must say I cannot be a deist without becoming a fool; and to exalt my reason, I must deny my senses.

"I take the *second datum*, and inquire, which tends most to general happiness? To secure happiness, three things are necessary: *object, means, and motives*. The question is, Which points out the *true source* of happiness; which directs to the *best means* for attaining it; and which furnishes me with the most *powerful motives* to induce my pursuit of it? If I take a deist for my tutor, he tells me that *fame* is the object; universal *accommodation of manners to interest*, the means; and *self-love* the spring of action. Sordid teacher! From him I turn to *Jesus*. His better voice informs me, that the source of felicity is the *friendship of my God*; that *love to my Maker, and love to man*, expressed in all the noble and amiable effusions of devotion and benevolence, are the means; and that *the glory of God, and the happiness of the universe*, must be my motives. Blessed Instructor, thy dictates approve themselves to every illuminated conscience, to every pious heart! Do they not, my dear P——, approve themselves to yours?

"But I will not tire your patience by pursuing these remarks. Little did I think of such amplification when I first took up my pen. Oh that I may have the joy of finding that these (at least well meant) endeavors to establish your piety have not been ungraciously received, nor wholly unprofitable to your mind! I am encouraged to these effusions of friendship by that amiable *self-distrust*, which your letter expresses; a temper not only becoming the earlier stages of life, but graceful in all its advancing periods.

"Unspeakable satisfaction does it afford me to find that you are conscious of the necessity of 'first' seeking assistance from Heaven. Retain, my dear friend, this honorable, this equitable sentiment. In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he shall direct thy paths."

"I hope you will still be cautious in your intimacies. You will gain more by a half-hour's intercourse with God, than the friendship of the whole college can impart. Too much acquaintance would be followed with a waste of that precious time, on the present improvement of which, your future usefulness and respectability in your profession depend. Like the bee, you may do best by sipping the sweets of every flower; but remember, the sweetest blossom is not the *hive*.

"Yours very affectionately. S. P."

"P. S. So many books have been published on the same subject as the manuscript you helped me to copy, that I have not sent it to the press.\*"

#### NO. III.

To a young lady at school Miss A. H. a daughter of one of the members of his church.

"I cannot deny myself the pleasure which this opportunity affords me, of expressing the concern I feel for your happiness, arising from the sincerest friendship; a friendship, which the many amiable qualities you possess together with the innumerable opportunities I have had of seeing them displayed, have taught me to form and perpetuate.

"It affords me inexpressible pleasure to hear, that you are so happy in your present situation: a situation in which I rejoice to see you placed, because it is not merely calculated to embellish the manners, but to profit the soul. I hope that my dear Ann, amidst the various pursuits of an ornamental or scientific nature, which she may adopt, will not omit that first, that great concern, the dedication of her heart to God. To this, my dear girl, every thing invites you that is worthy of your attention. The dignity of a rational and immortal soul, the condition of human nature, the gracious truths and promises of God, the sweetness and usefulness of religion, the comfort it yields in affliction, the security it affords in temptation, the supports it gives in death, and the prospects it opens of life everlasting; all these considerations, backed with the uncertainty of life, the solemnity of

judgment, the terrors of hell, and the calls of conscience and of God, all demand your heart for the *blessed Jehovah*. This, and nothing short of this, is true religion. You have often heard, and often *written* on religion: it is time you should *feel* it now. Oh what a blessedness will attend your hearty surrender of yourself to the God and Father of men! Methinks I see all the angels of God rejoicing at the sight, all the saints in heaven partaking of their joy; Jesus himself, who died for sinners, gazing on you with delight; your own heart filled with peace and joy in believing; and a thousand streams of goodness flowing from your renovated soul to refresh the aged saint, and to encourage your fellow youth to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and press on to God. But Oh, should I be mistaken! Alas, alas, I cannot bear the thought. Oh thou Saviour of sinners, and God of love! take captive the heart of my dear young friend, and make her truly willing to be wholly thine!

"If you can find freedom, do oblige me with a letter on the state of religion in your own soul, and be assured of every sympathy or advice that I am capable of feeling or giving. Affectionately yours, S. P."

#### NO. IV.

To a young Minister, Mr. C——, of L——, on preparation for the pulpit.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Your first letter gave me much pleasure. I hoped you would learn some useful lesson from the first Sabbath's disappointment. Every thing is good that leads us to depend more simply on the Lord. Could I choose my frames, I would say respecting industry in preparation for public work, as is frequently said respecting Christian obedience; I would apply as close as though I expected no help from the Lord, whilst I would depend on the Lord for assistance, as though I had never made any preparation at all.

"I rejoice much in every thing that affords you ground for solid pleasure. The account of the affection borne you by the people of God, was therefore a matter of joy to my heart, especially as I learnt from the person who brought your letter, that the friendship seemed pretty general.

"Your last has occasioned me some pain on your account, because it informs me that you have been 'exceeding tried in the pulpit;' but I receive satisfaction again from considering, that the gloom of midnight precedes the rising day, not only in the natural world, but frequently also in the Christian minister's experience. Do not be discouraged, my dear brother: those whose labors God has been pleased most eminently to bless, have generally had their

\* The Compiler believes this was an answer to Mr. Peter Edwards' *Candid Reasons*, &c. He knows Mr. Pearce did write an answer to that performance. By the effrontery of the writer he has acknowledged he was at first a little stunned; but upon examining his arguments, found it no very difficult undertaking to point out their fallacy.



days of prosperity ushered in with clouds and storms. You are in the sieve; but the sieve is in our Saviour's hands; and he will not suffer any thing but the chaff to fall through, let him winnow us as often as he may. No one at times, I think I may say, has been worse tried than myself, in the same manner as you express; though I must be thankful it has not been often.

"You ask direction of me, my dear brother. I am too inexperienced myself to be capable of directing others; yet if the little time I have been employed for God has furnished with me any thing worthy of communication, it will be imparted to no one with more readiness than to you.

"I should advise you when you have been distressed by hesitation, to reflect whether it arose from an inability to recollect your ideas, or to obtain words suited to convey them. If the former, I think these two directions may be serviceable; First, Endeavor to think *in a train*. Let one idea depend upon another in your discourses, as one link does upon another in a chain. For this end I have found it necessary to arrange my subjects in the order of time. Thus, for instance,—If speaking of the promises, I would begin with those which were suited to the earliest inquiries of a convinced soul; as, pardon, assistance in prayer, wisdom, &c.; then go to those parts of Christian experience which are usually subsequent to the former; as, promises of support in afflictions, deliverance from temptations, and perseverance in grace; closing with a review of those which speak of support in death, and final glory. Then all the varieties of description respecting the glory of heaven will follow in natural order; as, the enlargement of the understanding, purification of the affections, intercourse with saints, angels and Christ himself, which will be *eternal*; thus beginning with the lowest marks of grace, and ascending step by step, you at last arrive in the fruition of faith. This mode is most natural, and most pleasing to the hearers, as well as assisting to the preacher: for one idea gives birth to another, and he can hardly help going forward regularly and easily.

"Secondly, Labor to *render your ideas transparent to yourself*. Never offer to introduce a thought, which you cannot see *through* before you enter the pulpit. You have read in Claude, that the best preparative to preach from a subject, is to understand it: and I think bishop Burnet says, 'No man properly understands any thing, who cannot at *any time* represent it to others.'

"If your hesitation proceeds from a want of words, I should advise you, 1. To read good and easy authors; Dr. Watts speci-

ally. 2. To write a great part of your sermons, and for a while get at least the leading ideas of every head of discourse by heart, enlarging only at the close of every thought. 3. Sometimes, as in the end of sermons, or when you preach in villages, *start off in preaching beyond all you have premeditated*. Fasten on some leading ideas; as the solemnity of death, the awfulness of judgment, the necessity of a change of heart, the willingness of Christ to save, &c. Never mind how far you ramble from the point, so as you do not lose sight of it; and if your heart be any way warm, you will find some expressions then fall from your lips, which your imagination could not produce in an age of studious application. 4. *Divest yourself of all fear*. If you should break the rules of grammar, or put in, or leave out a word, and recollect at the end of the sentence the impropriety; unless it makes nonsense, or bad divinity, never try to mend it, but let it pass. If so perhaps, only a few would notice it; but if you stammer in trying to mend it, you will expose yourself to all the congregation.

"In addition to all I have said, you know where to look, and from whom to seek that wisdom and strength which only God can give. To him I recommend you, my dear brother, assuring you of my real esteem for you, and requesting you will not fail to pray for the least of saints, but yours affectionately,  
S. P."

#### CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

The great ends of christian Biography are instruction and example, by faithfully describing the lives of men eminent for goodness, we not only embalm their memory, but furnish ourselves with fresh materials and motives, for a holy life. It is abundantly more impressive to view the religion of Jesus as operating in a living character, then to contemplate it abstractedly. For this reason, we may suppose the Lord the Spirit has condescended to exhibit it first and principally the life of Christ; and after his, that of many of his eminent followers. And for this reason, he by his holy influences still furnishes the church with now and then a singular example of godliness, which it is our duty to notice and record. There can be no reasonable doubt that the life of Mr. Pearce ought to be considered as one of these examples. May that, same divine Spirit who had manifestly so great a hand in forming his character, teach us to derive from it both instruction and edification!

First: *In him we may see the holy efficacy*

and by consequence, the truth of the Christian religion.—It was long since asked, *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he, who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* This question contained a challenge to men of all religions, who were then upon the earth. Idolatry had a great diversity of species: every nation worshipping its own gods, and in modes peculiar to themselves: philosophers also were divided into numerous sects, each flattering itself that it had found the truth: even the Jews had their divisions; their Pharisees, Sadusees, and Essenes: but great as many of them were in deeds of divers kinds, an apostle could look them all in the face, and ask, *Who is he that overcometh the world?* The same question might be safely asked in every succeeding age. The various kinds of religion that still prevail; the pagan, mahometan, jewish, papal, or protestant may form the exteriors of man according to their respective models; but where is the man amongst them, save the true believer in Jesus, that overcometh the world? Men may cease from particular evils, and assume a very different character; may lay aside their drunkenness, blasphemies, or debaucheries, and take up with a kind of monkish austerity, and yet all amount to nothing more than an exchange of vices. The lusts of the flesh will on many occasions give place to those of the mind; but to overcome the world is another thing. By embracing the doctrines of the cross; to feel not merely a dread of the consequences of sin, but a holy abhorrence of its nature; and by conversing with invisible realities, to become regardless of the best, and fearless of the worst, that this world has to dispense; this is the effect of genuine Christianity, and this a standing proof of its divine original. Let the most inveterate enemy of revelation have witnessed the disinterested benevolence of a Paul, a Peter, or a John, and whether he would own it or not, his conscience must have borne testimony that this is true religion. The same may be said of Samuel Pearce: whether the doctrine he preached found a place in the hearts of his hearers or not, his spirit and life must have approved itself to their consciences.

Secondly: *In him we see how much may be done for God in a little time.* If his death had been foreknown by his friends, some might have hesitated whether it was worth while for him to engage in the work of the ministry for so short a period: yet, if we take a view of his labors, perhaps there are few lives productive of a greater portion of good. That life is, not always the longest which is spun out to the greatest extent of days. The first of all lives

amounted but to thirty-three years; and the most important works pertaining to that were wrought in the last three. There is undoubtedly a way of rendering a short life a long one, and a long life a short one, by filling or not filling it with proper materials. That time which is squandered away in sloth, or trifling pursuits, forms a kind of blank in human life: in looking it over there is nothing for the mind to rest upon; and a whole life so spent, whatever number of years it may contain, must appear upon reflection short and vacant, in comparison of one filled up with valuable acquisitions, and holy actions. It is like the space between us and the sun, which, though immensely greater than that which is traversed in a profitable journey, yet being all empty space, the mind goes over it in much less time, and without any satisfaction. If "that life be long which answers life's great end," Mr. Pearce may assuredly be said to have come to his grave in a good old age. And might we not all do much more than we do, if our hearts were more in our work? Where this is wanting, or operates but in a small degree, difficulties are magnified into impossibilities; a lion is in the way of extraordinary exertion; or if we be induced to engage in something of this kind, it will be at the expense of a uniform attention to ordinary duties. But some will ask, *How are our hearts to be in our work?* Mr. Pearce's heart was habitually in his; and that which kept alive the sacred flame in him appears to have been, The constant habit of conversing with divine truth, and walking with God in private.

Thirdly: In him we see in clear and strong colors, *to what a degree of solid peace and joy, true religion will raise us, even in the present world.* A little religion, it has been justly said, will make us miserable; but a great deal will make us happy. The one will do little more than keep the conscience alive, while our numerous defects and inconsistencies are perpetually furnishing it with materials to scourge us; the other keeps the heart alive, and leads us to drink deep at the fountain of joy. Hence it is, in a great degree, that so much of the spirit of bondage, and so little of the spirit of adoption prevails among Christians. Religious enjoyments with us are rather occasional, than habitual; or if in some instances it be otherwise, we are ready to suspect that it is supported in part by the strange fire of enthusiasm, and not by the pure flame of scriptural devotion. But, in Mr. Pearce we saw a devotion ardent, steady, pure, and persevering; kindled, as we may say, at the altar of God, like the fire of the temple, it went not out by night



nor by day. He seemed to have learned that heavenly art, so conspicuous among the primitive Christians, of converting every thing he met with into materials for love and joy, and praise. Hence he "labored," as he expresses it, "to exercise most love to God when suffering most severely;" and hence he so affectingly encountered the billows that overwhelmed his feeble frame, crying,

"Sweet affliction, sweet affliction,  
Singing as I wade to heaven."

The constant happiness that he enjoyed in God was apparent in the effects of his sermons upon others. Whatever we feel ourselves we shall ordinarily communicate to our hearers: and it has been already noticed that one of the most distinguishing properties of his discourses was, that they inspired the serious mind with the liveliest sensations of happiness. They descended upon the audience, not indeed like a transporting flood, but like a shower of dew: gently insinuating itself into the heart, insensibly dissipating its gloom, and gradually drawing forth the graces of faith, hope, love, and joy: while the countenance was brightened almost into a smile, tears of pleasure would rise, and glisten, and fall from the admiring eye.

What a practical confutation did his life afford of the slander so generally cast upon the religion of Jesus, that it fills the mind with gloom and misery! No: leaving futurity out of the question, the whole world of unbelievers might be challenged to produce a character from among them who possessed half his enjoyments.

Fourthly: From his example we are furnished with the *greatest encouragement, while pursuing the path of duty, to place our trust in God*. The situation in which he left his family, we have seen already, was not owing to an indifference to their interest, or an improvident disposition, or the want of opportunity to have provided for them; but to a steady and determined obedience to do what he accounted the will of God. He felt deeply for them, and we all felt with him, and longed to be able to assure him before his departure, that they would be amply provided for; but owing to circumstances which have already been mentioned, this was more than we could do. This was a point in which he was called to *die in faith*; and indeed so he did. He appears to have had no idea of that flood of kindness, which, immediately after his decease, flowed from the religious public; but he believed in God, and cheerfully left all with him. "Oh that I could speak," said he to Mrs. Pearce a little before his death. "I would tell a world to trust a faithful God. Sweet affliction; now it worketh glory, glo-

ry!" And when she told him the workings of her mind, he answered, "O trust the Lord! If he lift up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become mole-hills. I feel your situation: I feel your sorrows: but he who takes care of sparrows, will care for you and my dear children."

The liberal contributions which have since been made, though they do not warrant ministers in general to expect the same, and much less to neglect providing for their own families on such a presumption; yet they must needs be considered as a singular encouragement, when we are satisfied that we are in the path of duty, to be inordinately "careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known unto God."

Finally: In him we see that *the way to true excellence is not to affect eccentricity, nor to aspire after the performance of a few splendid actions; but to fill up our lives with a sober, modest, sincere, affectionate, assiduous, and uniform conduct*. Real greatness attaches to character: and character arises from a *course of action*. Solid reputation as a merchant arises not from a man's having made his fortune by a few successful adventures; but from a course of wise economy and honorable industry, which gradually accumulating, advances by pence to shillings, and by shillings to pounds. The most excellent philosophers are not those who have dealt chiefly in splendid speculations, and looked down upon the ordinary concerns of men as things beneath their notice, but those who have felt their interests united with the interests of mankind, and bent their principal attention to things of real and public utility. It is much the same in religion. We do not esteem a man for one, or two, or three good deeds, any farther than as these deeds are indications of the real state of his mind. We do not estimate the character of Christ himself so much from his having given sight to the blind, or restored Lazarus from the grave, as from his *going about continually doing good*.

These single attempts at great things are frequently the efforts of a vain mind, which pants for fame, and has not patience to wait for it nor discernment to know the way in which it is obtained. One pursues the shade, and it flies from him; while another turns his back upon it, and it follows him. The one aims at once to climb the rock, but falls ere he reaches the summit: the other walking round it, in pursuit of another object, gradually and insensibly ascends till he reaches it: seeking the approbation of his God, he finds with it that of his fellow-Christians.

# “THE GARDENER AND ROSE-TREE.”

“A FABLE.”

“Affectionately addressed to Mrs. J. H——, on the death of her child, by her truly sympathising friend.  
 “March 12, 1798. S. P.”

“In a sweet spot which Wisdom chose,  
 Grew an unique and lovely Rose;  
 A flow’r so fair was seldom borne—  
 A Rose almost without a thorn.  
 Each passing stranger stop’d to view  
 A plant possessing charms so new:  
 “*Sweet Flow’r!*” each lip was heard to say,  
 Nor less the Owner pleased than they;  
 Rear’d by his hand with constant care,  
 And planted in his choice parterre,  
 Of all his garden this the pride,  
 No flower so much admired beside.

Nor did the rose unconscious bloom,  
 Nor feel ungrateful for the boon,  
 Oft as her guardian came that way,  
 Whether at dawn or eve of day,  
 Expanded wide—her form unveil’d,  
 She *double fragrance* then exhal’d.

As months rolled on, the spring appear’d  
 Its genial rays the Rose matur’d  
 Forth from its root a *shoot* extends—  
 The parent Rose-tree downward bends,  
 And with a joy unknown before,  
 Contemplates the yet embryo flow’r.

“Offspring most dear (she fondly said),  
 Part of myself! beneath my shade,  
 Safe shalt thou rise, whilst happy I,  
 Transported with maternal joy,  
 Shall see thy little buds appear,  
 Unfold and bloom in beauty here.  
 What though the Lily, or Jonquil,  
 Or Hyacinth no longer fill  
 The space around me—All shall be  
 Abundantly made up in thee.

“What though my present charms decay,  
 And passing strangers no more say  
 Of me, “*Sweet flower!*” yet *thou* shalt raise  
 Thy blooming head, and gain the praise;  
 And this reverberated pleasure  
 Shall be to me a world of treasure.  
 Cheerful I part with former merit,  
 That it my darling may inherit.  
 Haste then the hours which bid thee bloom,  
 And fill the zephyrs with perfume!”

Thus had the Rose-tree scarcely spoken,  
 Ere the sweet cup of bliss was broken;  
 The Gard’ner came, and with one stroke  
 He from the root the offspring took;  
 Took from the soil wherein it grew,  
 And hid it from the parent’s view.

Judge ye who know a mother’s cares  
 For the dear tender babe she bears,  
 The parents anguish, ye alone  
 Such sad vicissitudes have known.

Deep was the wound; nor slight the pain  
 Which made the Rose-tree thus complain;

“Dear little darling! art thou gone—  
 Thy charms scarce to thy mother known!  
 Remov’d so soon! So suddenly,  
 Snatch’d from my fond maternal eye!  
 What hast thou done? dear offspring! say,  
 So *early* to be snatch’d away!  
 What! gone for *ever*! seen no more!  
 For ever I thy loss deplore.  
 Ye dews descend, with tears supply  
 My now forever tearful eye;  
 Or rather come some northern blast,  
 Dislodge my yielding roots in haste.  
 Whirlwinds arise—my branches tear,  
 And to some distant regions bear  
 Far from this spot, a wretched mother,  
 Whose fruit and joys are gone together.”

As thus the anguish’d Rose-tree cry’d,  
 Her owner near her she espy’d;  
 Who in these gentle terms reprov’d  
 A plant, though murrin’ring, still below’d:

“Cease beauteous flow’r these useless cries,  
 And let my lessons make thee wise.  
 Art thou not mine? Did not my hand  
 Transplant thee from the barren sand  
 Where once a mean unsightly plant,  
 Expos’d to injury and want,  
 Unknown, and unadmir’d, I found,  
 And brought thee to this fertile ground;  
 With studious art improv’d thy form,  
 Secur’d thee from the inclement storm,  
 And through the seasons of the year,  
 Made thee my unabating care?  
 Hast thou not blest thy happy lot,  
 In such an owner—such a spot?  
 But now because thy shoot I’ve taken,  
 Thy best of friends must be forsaken.  
 Know flow’r below’d, e’en this affliction  
 Shall prove to thee a benediction:  
 Had I not the young plant remov’d  
 (So fondly by thy heart below’d)  
 Of me thy heart would scarce have thought,  
 With gratitude no more be fraught:  
 —Yea—thy own beauty be at stake  
 Surrender’d for thy offspring’s sake.  
 Nor think, that, hidden from thine eyes,  
 The infant plant neglected lies—  
 No—I’ve another garden where  
 In richer soil and purer air  
 It’s now transplanted, there to shine,  
 In beauties fairer far than thine.

“Nor shalt thou always be apart  
 From the dear darling of thy heart;  
 For ’tis my purpose thee to bear  
 In future time, and plant thee there,  
 Where thy now absent off-set grows,  
 And blossoms a *celestial* Rose.  
 Be patient, then, till that set hour shall come,  
 When thou and thine shall in new beauties bloom.  
 No more its absence shalt thou then deplore,  
 Together grow, and ne’er be parted more.”

These words to silence hush’d the plaintive  
 Rose,  
 With deeper blushes redd’ning now she glows,  
 Submissive bow’d her unrepining head,  
 Again her wonted, grateful fragrance shed—  
 Cry’d, “Thou hast taken only what’s thine own,  
 Therefore, thy will, my Lord, not mine, be  
 done.”

THE END.



THE  
COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION,  
NO  
JUST PLEA  
FOR  
INFANT BAPTISM.

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By W. T. BRANTLY.

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Is there in the word of God any requisition upon Christians, to attempt the introduction of their infant offspring into the visible church? Is the rite of baptism to be administered to them with this view? And though they cannot answer for themselves, nor exercise faith and repentance, are they to be baptized upon the alleged faith of their parents? To these questions all Baptists reply, no. They thus place themselves in opposition to the prevalent belief and practice of a large portion of the Christian world. Nor is it only the current belief and practice of the Christian world to which they stand opposed, but to the opinions and customs of past ages. The position which they assume is in bold and open contradiction to the authority and learning of very many names, venerable for piety and usefulness, both in ancient and modern times. For it cannot be dissembled, that the authorities for Infant Baptism, date as far back as the close of the second century, and the beginning of the third,\* so that it has at least the sanction of antiquity. And were it not that New Testament authority is wanting to it, that the sacred scriptures, neither implicitly, nor explicitly teach it, and that reason dissuades it, Baptists might be justly alarmed at the singularity of their attitude, and urged to compliance with a custom so ancient and respectable. They persuade themselves that they love their infants as much as others, that they as earnestly desire their salvation, and that they are as ready as others, to promote and fa-

cilitate by every lawful means, their conversion to God; but they cannot be persuaded to adopt as a religious rite, any tradition how ancient soever; nor to conform to a custom which, in its very institution, presupposes a defect in the Divine Law and Testimony. They conceive the inspired code of the Lord to be too perfect, to leave space for any supplementary acts on their part, and therefore feel it solemnly binding on them, to abjure the presumption of practising uncommanded ordinances.

It has been assumed that the connection subsisting betwixt believing parents and their children, under the gospel dispensation, is precisely similar to that which previously intervened betwixt parents and their offspring under the covenant of circumcision. Or, to express the matter more definitely, it is asserted by the advocates of infant baptism, that among all those embraced in the covenant of circumcision there was, between parents and children, a certain connection, by virtue of which the children were circumcised, and admitted to all the blessings of the said covenant. This being the covenant of grace, and circumcision the seal of it; and the covenant of our Lord and Saviour being also the covenant of grace, and baptism being the seal of it, therefore, they allege, that the infants of those under the gospel covenant should be brought within the pale of the visible church by the ordinance of baptism.

To show that I do not misstate their views I shall here adduce the language of a few of their most judicious writers. "The perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, and of consequence the identity of the church under both dispensations, is so plainly taught in scripture, and follows so unavoidably from the radical scriptural principles concerning the church of God, that it is indeed wonderful how any believer in the bible can call in question the fact. Every thing es-

\* The first public recognition of infant baptism was A. D. 250. It may be supposed to have existed anterior to that period, and to have been gradually working its way into the church along with other corruptions. But the grand error under the sanction of which it obtained prevalence, was that baptism and regeneration were one and the same thing. So soon as that came to be a general belief, it was deemed necessary in order to ensure the spiritual illumination of infants, to have them baptized.—See *Neander's History of the Christian Religion*, p. 361.

sential to ecclesiastical identity is evidently found here. The same Divine Head, the same precious covenant, the same great spiritual design, the same atoning blood, the same sanctifying Spirit, in which we rejoice as the life and glory of the New Testament church were also the life and the glory of the church before the coming of the Messiah. It is not more certain that a man arrived at a mature age, is the same individual that he was when an infant on his mother's lap, than it is that the church, in the plenitude of her light and privileges, after the coming of Christ, is the same church, which many centuries before, though with a much smaller amount of light and privilege, yet as we are expressly told in the New Testament, Acts vii. 38, enjoyed the presence and guidance of her divine head in the wilderness.\* "The point of primary importance in the present argument is, the connection established under the former economy between parents and their infant offspring. By virtue of that connection infants were circumcised, and if that connection has never been by divine appointment dissolved or diminished, then by virtue of that connection infants should be baptized. It is a connection in the covenant of grace, the covenant of redemption, the everlasting covenant, embracing all that man can desire, and all that Jehovah can impart."† "Abraham was admitted to the rite of circumcision which was a testimony of his dependence upon the covenant of grace, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." Rom. iv. 11. That ordinance is now abolished. But we celebrate another which has succeeded it, and which is the standing means of admission into the Christian church.‡ "The covenant with Abraham being in reality the gospel covenant, set forth in types and figures according to the manner of ancient times, may we not from the use and efficacy of circumcision, believe that baptism the rite of initiation into the Christian church, is like it, a seal of the gospel covenant, and a declaration on the part of God, that he will count the faith of the baptized person for righteousness? and that like circumcision it may be administered to infants, to assure their parents that their future faith shall be accounted, and rewarded as righteousness, or if they die in infancy, that they shall be raised to eternal life? In this view the baptizing of infants is a reasonable rite, and must afford the greatest consolation to all pious parents."§

The production of authorities to prove the reliance of pædobaptists upon the Abrahamic covenant for the justification of infant baptism, might be carried to an indefinite extent; all their writers, so far as I know,

make this the main hinge of the whole argument. If there be any material disagreement among them, I am not aware of it. Their comments upon the rite of circumcision from very ancient times, as may be seen both in the Greek and Latin writers, unite generally in assigning to it an import typical of baptism. The ancients in this particular have been followed by the moderns, and as often as the vindication of infant baptism has been attempted, so often the old Abrahamic seal has been re-proclaimed as an unanswerable argument. This has been pointed to as a standing monument whose inscription was to be known and read of all men, whose meaning was to admit of no doubt, and whose expressive evidence was to silence all disputation. Baptists and those of similar opinions, have often examined, and re-examined this Abrahamic monument, with a view to ascertain its import; and after the most impartial investigation, and sober inquiry, and wakeful scrutiny, have brought back the solemn report, that it points to nothing bearing even the semblance of baptism.

We have reached and established, at least in our own minds, this conclusion, by a careful discussion of the grounds and positions assumed and methodised by our opponents into what they consider, one irrefragable argument. The argument as we understand it is this. "Under the former economy there existed betwixt parents and their infant offspring, a certain connection or relation, by virtue of which infants received circumcision, the then apparent sign or seal of the covenant of grace, and henceforth became entitled to all the benefits of that covenant. That connection or relation has not been dissolved under the gospel dispensation, the church of the former, being identical with the church of the latter, and differing from it only, as an infant on its mother's lap, differs from the adult man. Therefore infants under the gospel dispensation are entitled to receive baptism—the seal of the new covenant and, consequently, it is the duty of their parents to have it administered to them."

The foregoing paragraph contains as fair a reduction of the several propositions as can be made, under the circumstances of the case. It is a faithful abstract of the authorities referred to, and in my judgment, of all other reasonings and comments instituted with the view of substantiating the same propositions. Let the reader now revert to the three members of the formula, and keep them steadily in view while the discussion is proceeding.

The first member of the argument asserts, That under the former economy there existed between parents and their infant offspring, a certain connection or relation, by virtue of which infants received circumci-

\* S. Miller of Princeton.

† H. F. Burder of England.

‡ Robinson's Scripture Characters.

§ Macknight on Rom. iv. 11.



sion, the then visible sign or seal of the covenant of grace, and henceforth became entitled to all the benefits of that covenant. To the truth and justness of this proposition several exceptions occur, which must be fatal to it. Let them emerge from obscurity and the whole argument is lost.

1. It is assumed that the covenant of circumcision is mainly and primarily the covenant of grace. But, had not the covenant of grace existed long before Abraham? And had it not been imparting its blessings, to those who lived and died in faith long before that patriarch? By what covenant was it, that righteous Abel was accepted and justified; that Enoch was raised to the dignity and privilege of walking with God; that Noah, impelled by faith in God's revelations, prepared an Ark to the saving of of himself and family, and became a preacher of righteousness; and that the Spirit of God when once his long suffering waited in the days of Noah, sustained the litigation, the strife, in human hearts, against human depravity? Surely it were an impossible presumption that faith, and repentance, and all godly affections were produced and nurtured under a covenant of works. The promise of Jehovah to Abraham, that he should be the honored progenitor of the Messiah; and the consequent extension of blessings to all the nations of the earth through him, did but define and ratify the gracious promise according to which he had been already justified whilst in uncircumcision, Rom. iv. 11. The former part of Hebrews xi. shows that the whole plan and process of justification by faith, was in operation for nearly two thousand years before circumcision was known.

2. The position to which we are now attempting to apply the test of truth, affirms that the infant offspring of parents under the Abrahamic covenant, had a title to all the benefits and blessings of that covenant and by consequence to the covenant of grace. From this we are left to infer most inevitably, that the infant offspring of all believers anterior to Abraham, had not this title; and therefore, if they participated at all in the provisions of the covenant of grace, it must have been a sort of unauthorized intrusion upon a province to which they had no claim. At this rate the children of the righteous men who were the very contemporaries of Abraham, such as Job and Melchisedec, would have been lawfully excluded from the consolations of that religion which had cheered and supported their parents in this life, and had fixed their hopes upon a glorious future. The truth, however, is, that Jehovah has never been, and never will be, a respecter of persons; but in every nation he that fears God, is accepted of him, irrespectively of all external distinctions and privileges. Circumcision then, could have

brought the descendants of Abraham no nearer to grace, than uncircumcision, which latter was no bar to grace.

3. We are now prepared to deny the assumption, that the covenant of circumcision was mainly, or primarily, the covenant of grace. That it was collaterally and inferentially so is admitted. But if it were primarily and mainly so, the exclusion from grace, of all mankind not embraced within the seal, must follow as a necessary consequence. And this consequence has been not only admitted, but strenuously urged by a large majority of those who have maintained the notion of the identity of the Abrahamic dispensation with that of the Evangelical. According to them, infant baptism has been held as a rite, without the due administration of which, there was no obvious possibility of salvation to infants. They are at least consistent with themselves. If I could believe that baptism has come in lieu of circumcision, and that the latter rite was necessary to secure an interest in the covenant of grace under the former economy, then should I most assuredly believe, that baptism is necessary to the salvation of the infants of all believing parents.

If it be asked, what was then the Abrahamic covenant, of which circumcision was the seal, if it were not the one, true, and only covenant of grace? I reply. It did embrace prospectively the blessings of the Messiah's Kingdom, and these blessings were to be irrespective of ceremonial marks, or limitation—and it did actually embrace the temporal provision of good things for those descendants of Abraham, who should bear the impress of the seal. The seal then had nothing to do with the spiritual and gracious import of the covenant, but only with its political and temporal bearing. The learned Photius, patriarch of Constantinople about the middle of the ninth century, though admitting circumcision in a secondary sense to be a type of baptism, yet maintains its primary meaning to be political. He says, "Circumcision appears to me to intend three things. The first without doubt, is, that as a sign or seal it might separate, and distinguish from other nations, the posterity of Abraham."\* Chrysostom 39th Homily on Genesis, assigns the same reason for it. "The sign of circumcision," he says, "separated the Jews from the other nations."† Theodoretus writes to the same effect. "The Jews in Canaan were about to be in the immediate proximity of nations

\* Η περιτομή τρία τινα πραγματευομένη μοι δοκεῖ. ἢ μὲν, οἷον ἐστὶ σημεῖον τινὶ καὶ σφραγίδι τῆς ἐκγονῆς Ἀβραὰμ ἀφορίζουσα, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν διασέλλουσα ἔθνων.—Photius *epist.* ccv. p. 302, as quoted by Suicer

† Ἰουδαίους τὸ περιτομῆς σημεῖον ἐχώριζε τῶν λοιπῶν ἐθνῶν.

differing from them, wherefore, they required of necessity a certain sign or mark to distinguish them from other nations.\* Many other quotations might be presented, clearly indicative of the opinions of the most learned Greek fathers on the design of circumcision. But these may suffice.

The only portion of scripture which will be thought to oppose the foregoing opinion, is Rom. iv. 11, to which allusion has been already made. "And he, Abraham, received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." This scripture in no wise opposes the ground now taken. To Abraham as an individual, as one believing and acting for himself, and for no body else, circumcision was the seal of his justification by faith. It was to him the remembrancer of God's unmerited grace in his election to salvation through faith and that not of himself, but the gift of God. But when this seal came to be applied to male infants of the children and posterity of Abraham, did it speak to them the same language that it did to him? In that case, many thousands of confirmed reprobates must have had, all the time of their profligacy and ungodliness, the seal of their justification by faith.

4. A certain connection or relation betwixt believing parents and their offspring, is made a plea for infant baptism. To be sure, there is a certain connection or relation betwixt all parents and their infant offspring. This cannot be denied. But is this any thing more than a physical relationship? Does any one imagine that gracious dispositions are transmissible by consanguinity? It is without doubt, a great mercy to be descended of pious parents, a privilege by no means to be despised; but it is a privilege dependent wholly upon external circumstances. The child of the greatest saint on earth, is naturally no nearer to God, than that of the greatest reprobate.

5. The argument of our Pædobaptist brethren takes for granted that baptism is the seal of New Testament blessings, and therefore to be applied to infants. Against this position we must likewise raise the strong voice of protestation. We have only to deny their assumption, and it instantly ceases to avail any thing—for in the absence of proof, we may boldly deny any principle, or any inference, unless it be self evident. But in the whole New Testament history of baptism there is not the remotest intimation of such an idea. It appears not to have entered into the mind of our Lord, nor of his disciples, nor immediate succe-

sors, ever once to drop a hint which, even by allusion, can be so interpreted. Still the sacred word is not silent respecting the seal. Believers are sealed unto the day of Redemption, and they are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, and hence derive a permanent, indelible character, which is true circumcision of the heart in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh. This is the only act of oblation which can be reasonable and proper; that which it is supposed baptism constitutes is preposterous, for if it can be called a seal, it is a seal for the ratification of a nonentity—nothing is sealed.

On this head there is some diversity of opinion among Pædobaptists. A large class of them hold and defend the idea, that the oblationary act of baptism, as they term it, does seal something; that some grace is imparted to the recipient, and a new character impressed upon him. The baptismal service in the liturgy of the Episcopal Church requires the return of thanks to God, for the presumed regeneration of the child, by the act of baptism. This class of Pædobaptists are much opposed by their brethren, who on the other hand, deny the communication of any spiritual or moral qualifications in the baptismal administration to infants. In my opinion the baptismal-regeneration class, are more consistent at least with the principle assumed by both, and that is: that baptism is the seal of character and the evidence of title to privileges. Those advocates for infant baptism, who admit that no spiritual or inward grace is conveyed thereby to the soul of the recipient, seem to me to be inconsistent with themselves when they contend that baptism is a sealing ordinance. To call it the outward sign of an invisible grace, is truly a misnomer, since no grace is thereby imparted. Should it be said that the grace derived from their pious parents, is that on which the seal is impressed, in the baptism of infants, the matter is still more inexplicable. The taint of original sin appears to run in the blood from father to son; and has assumed this order of propagation, from Adam down to the present time. But if the word of God makes a true representation, there is no channel except that of regeneration, through which can flow those sanctifying virtues that go to correct this taint, and cleanse the soul from its inherent pollution.

6. But if all the intents and purposes of circumcision be responded to, and verified by baptism, how are we to account for the remarkable declarations in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians touching the subject of circumcision? In chapter the fifth he strongly deprecates the imputation of preaching circumcision, and clears himself of the charge

\* Εμελλον εθνεσιν αλληλοφλοις προσπελαζειν; η δε χριστιανισμους αναγκαίως της σφραγίδος εδεοντο, &c.



by repeated denials. In declining to preach it he had suffered persecution; had in a manner expatriated himself from his nation, and become the demolisher of that which he once built up. His Jewish brethren converted to the Christian faith, and others who thought that the covenant of circumcision should be still observed, is the party with which he is contesting the important point. Had it been a fact that baptism had taken the place of circumcision, it is wonderful that Paul refrained, under such circumstances, from its assertion. As the party which he labored to convince, attached so much importance to circumcision, and were therefore almost pertinacious in their purpose of retaining it, to satisfy their scruples, he could have said, and in my judgment should have said, "It is true that circumcision was the seal of the Abrahamic covenant, that all the male descendants of that patriarch, received this seal, and were thereby admitted to the blessings and privileges of the covenant; but now, a new seal is introduced, a new ordinance, more befitting the diffusive nature of gospel blessings, and more reasonable in point of signification; that ordinance is baptism, which is applied not only to the male but to the female offspring of all believers who become in consequence the spiritual seed of Abraham." There is, however, no such intimation in any thing which the apostle utters. Wherever he mentions circumcision as having a typical sense, it is invariably referred to the work of moral renovation by the spirit of God. "He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God," Rom. ii. 29. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ," Col. ii. 11. "For we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. iii. 3. This transfer of the literal and external idea of the rite, to the characteristics of the spiritual and internal grace, is most forcible and apposite. As an illustration it is replete with a meaning that must reach every heart. But the same idea transferred to baptism whether of infants, or of adults, falls vapid and insignificant upon the understanding of every one.

7. In the baptismal controversy, much reliance has been placed upon the assumed identity of the Jewish, and the Christian church. It is urged, that they differ in no other respect, than that in which the periods of infancy, and mature age differ, in the same individual. The church of God, it is said, was in its minority under the former dispensation, and in the latter, it is the

same church having attained the manly age and freedom. From this identity it is argued, that the infant offspring of those within the gospel church, have a sort of a birth-right privilege, founded upon their descent. To exhibit the utter futility of this argument, we have only to suppose a case. A preacher of the gospel stands for the first time before a congregation of unconverted persons, of whom one half are the children of pious parents, who took early care to draw over them the veil of the covenant, as they thought, by applying to them, the substitute for circumcision, namely baptism. The other half are the children of parents who adopted no such precautions. The preacher opens and expounds the terms of his commission, to this whole company. He informs them that, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; that God now commands all men every where to repent," that a free and full salvation is now proclaimed without distinction of men or nation, to all the human family; and adds with full and gracious emphasis, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely." I ask, does the preacher furnish a just view of the gospel commission? If he does, he places the whole congregation upon one footing, and offers for the conversion of the privileged portion, no facilities or encouragements, more than to that which stands upon uncovenanted ground. But the moment he draws a line of distinction betwixt this ungodly assemblage, and represents a part of them as being more welcome to the Saviour than the rest, he compromises his commission, and also the Truth itself. Where then, I ask, are the covenanted privileges of infant baptism. Infant Baptism must either accomplish something, or nothing. If no object be attained by it, then it is a perfect nullity, if not worse. If some end, some good purpose, some benevolent intention be ensured by it, what is that end, that purpose, that design? Does it introduce the infant into the visible church? Does it more certainly procure for it the privileges of the covenant of grace? Does it supply motives and circumstances by which gracious predispositions to godliness and piety are excited within it, or else thrown about it? If it accomplish all this, or even any part of it, then baptized infants are not the same strangers from God, and aliens from the covenant of promise, as others, they are not sinners in the same sense as others, they need not repentance in the same sense as others, their calling and election, require not the same efficiency of grace for their certification; and they accordingly need a less effort of grace, for their justification and deliverance from the effects of sin.

It is unnecessary to proceed in developing the consequences which must unavoidably result from the assumptions of those

who defend infant baptism. Such consequences are as abhorrent from the deductions of sound reason, as they are from the genius of the gospel. For, in real, sober, unaffected truth, the baptism of infants leaves them, just where it found them. It is not possible in the nature of things, nor according to the constitution of the gospel economy, that it should modify, either their state, or moral character. We have for many centuries, as a denomination, borne our strong, and decided testimony against it. Our opinions are gaining ground, and the doctrines held by our pædobaptist brethren are surely receding from the bold stand which they once occupied. There is scarcely a Pædobaptist church, either in England or America, without some anti-pædobaptists. They are to be found where they are, from causes and circumstances wholly disconnected with Pædobaptist predilections. They are permitted to remain there in the open neglect of an alleged duty; and even whilst their opinions and sentiments are known to be opposed to that alleged duty. But is there a Baptist church in existence, which admits to fellowship in the privileges of the Lord's house, those who neglect conformity to the requisition of Christ, in regard to baptism, and who justify themselves in that neglect? Should it be said, that this is because we are less liberal than others, we reply; Let us be for ever delivered from that liberality, which prostrates the authority of Christ.

In the remarks for which the limits of this Work allow further space, I shall prove to the satisfaction at least of the unprejudiced, that there can be no proper and rational connection or similitude between circumcision and baptism. This I shall attempt by comparing the nature, uses, and ends of both. 1. Circumcision had no necessary connection with the covenant of grace, for if it had, then it should have been administered to all the saints prior, and subsequent to Abraham. It is altogether admissible, nay it is manifest that the church as it existed in spiritual relation to Jehovah, and to its own members; was the same before and after Abraham? Faith in God, was the common bond of union, and the basis of identity. In this respect Abraham and his pious descendants were in exact agreement and similarity with Abel, and Seth, and Enoch, and Noah, and Lot, and Melchisedec, and Job, and all the members of the antediluvian, as well as the post-diluvian church, who knew nothing about circumcision. The rite in question, therefore, was not essential to an interest in the covenant of grace. But it was indispensably necessary to an interest in the national blessings promised to Abraham and his posterity, under the seal of circumcision. A linial descendant of Abraham if uncir-

cumcised, was excluded, by the express command of God, from citizenship in the Jewish nation, and from all its attendant privileges.

From all this it follows incontestably, that circumcision was the mark of nationality, that it belonged to a temporal policy, and was not the necessary obsequiation of moral character. Baptism on the other hand, though not essential to salvation, yet precedes it by an order of events which no man dares to change. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The first duty after faith is baptism. This is the law of the evangelical economy, and so universally binding is it, that its wilful neglect and violation must be always attended with sin, in a greater or less degree. Many, it is true, may be admitted to a participation in the benefits of salvation, without baptism. Their sin of omission may be excused and forgiven, on various grounds; but neither its excusableness, nor its forgiveness, can in any wise invalidate the order of scripture. The succession of salvation to faith and baptism, stands as the permanent, and unalterable gradation of events in the gospel plan. The great author and finisher of our faith, has not informed us how this gradation may be disturbed without destroying the hope of salvation; but he has plainly intimated to us, that the servant who knows his Lord's will, and doeth it not, may expect no very favorable reception of his Lord, but may rather look for the infliction of stripes.

2. Whatever circumcision might have been, it did not distinguish the righteous from the wicked. It did distinguish one family from all other families, and nations. It was a discriminating mark, by which that one family should be kept within the line of its own proper descent, from one generation to another. But amid the most open, and grievous apostacies of the Jewish people, their national seal continued to be impressed upon all their male offspring, as strictly as in the most prosperous times of piety; nor was it ever a doctrine among them, that impiety of conduct subsequent to the reception of the seal, in any manner annulled their claim to the privileges of which it was the sign. As an ordinance enjoined in the terms of the new covenant, baptism is a rite designed to distinguish betwixt the godly and the ungodly. In it believers are buried, and risen with Christ; it is the signal of their crucifixion and resurrection with their Lord and Saviour, and the remembrancer of their entire consecration to his service. Deliberate and continual wickedness after baptism, manifestly excludes the delinquent party from all the privileges of the visible church, and places him in no better relation to that church than a heathen may possess.



3. The covenant of grace had its accomplishment in the person, offices, sufferings, and crucifixion of Christ. He undertook to fulfil its stipulations, and did actually, and truly conduct it to the glorious height of a full consummation. Thus completed, thus secured against all possibility of change or retraction, it is in due course of administration under the plans and arrangements of the gospel dispensation. This is Messiah's kingdom, a kingdom not of this world, but of the spiritual, invisible world. It stands open for the reception of people of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues. It creates a holy unity among all those embraced within its influence, by the infusion of a gracious spirit into their hearts, and by imparting to them the cementing charities of regeneration. They have become "A chosen generation, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they may show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light." There is henceforth "Neither Jew, nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female," but all are one in Christ. The extension of blessings to all mankind, and the wide diffusion of light and mercy in the joyful sound of salvation, are the well known characteristics of the New Testament dispensation. Does any rite or ordinance, commemorative of the restrictive and circumscribed economy of an obsolete ceremonial, comport with the expansive benevolence and grace of the gospel? To our Pædobaptist brethren we must speak on this topic with great frankness and affection. When your children, on whom you have procured the administration of baptism, ask you, "What mean ye by this service?" what reply, which shall not perplex and mystify the word of God, can you make? Will you tell them that baptism is a substitute for circumcision; that they are now under the seal of the covenant of grace, and entitled to all its privileges; and that they are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise? And if they ask you again, what mean ye, by the word *seal*? You must surely tell them, if consistent with yourselves, that it is the external sign of an internal grace. But if you inform them that it is a sign that signifies nothing, that it is merely the shadow of a shade; that they will surely think that an illusive mockery has been practised upon them. And if you persuade them that baptism is regeneration, and they are induced to believe what you say; as a matter of course, they will seek no other regeneration; and will rest in the groundless confidence that they are already secure of all the provisions of the gracious covenant.

4. Circumcision preceded all knowledge and consciousness on the part of the male infants upon whom it was inflicted. Ac-

cording, however, to the very Institution of baptism, it succeeds knowledge, faith, and the conscious persuasions of the mind. So often as baptism is mentioned in the entire New Testament, so often is it preceded by the mental and moral actions of its recipients. John baptized only upon a profession of repentance; the Saviour commanded baptism only as consequent upon faith. The apostles and primitive disciples, so far as we know, baptized none except upon profession of faith in Christ. The baptism of infants breaks the sacred order of succession in the gospel plan, and inverts the scale of duty. For duty proceeds from conviction and faith, whilst Pædobaptism places action even before rational consciousness of any sort. Surely we do not misname it, when we say it is preposterous. It places the consequent where the antecedent should be, and thus disturbs the settled harmony of truth and obedience.

Can it therefore be imagined, that circumcision which was applied to passive and unconscious subjects, was intended to typify baptism, which was never applied, according to New Testament authority, to any but intelligent, conscious, and responsible agents?

5. Baptism affects the whole body, being its thorough immersion into water, in the name of the adorable Trinity. Of this fact, there can be little doubt left to any reader of the New Testament, in any language. Had we been present at the administrations of this ordinance, which took place in the days of our Saviour and his apostles; and were now about to render in our testimony, as to the mode which was then adopted, we might of course speak with irresistible confidence and certainty. As eye witnesses, if our credibility in other respects were not impeachable, we should be entitled to the most implicit belief. But, neither have we been eye witnesses, nor has one come from the dead to certify to us the rectitude of our views and practice. The ground of our confidence, however, in their exact accordance with the views and practices of the apostolic age, are as strong and undeniable, as if they were vouched for by eye-witnesses, or by those who arose from the dead. The strong, repeated, and unambiguous terms, in which the form of baptism is made known to us, allow very little room even for captiousness to exert itself. It must be a mind addicted to quibbling, and exceedingly unhinged by the oscillations of doubt, which can find uncertainty in the meaning of the word baptism. It is a word of full and definite import. It is expressive of an action, with accompanying facts and circumstances, which cannot be misunderstood. Water sufficient for immersion is, in the New Testament, often placed in direct connection with baptism,

and is always necessarily presupposed. The word in English most nearly equivalent to it, is immersion, and though every immersion is not baptism, yet every baptism is immersion. That the baptism of the Saviour himself, was the immersion of his body under the waves of Jordan's stream, by John, cannot be well and fairly doubted, because it is expressly said, He *emerged*\* which he could not have done unless he had been first *immersed*. And that the Saviour commanded in the great commis-

Ανεβη εϋθὺς ἀπο τοῦ ὕδατος.

sion, the administration of baptism in the same sense, in which he himself had received it, cannot be consistently questioned. Is there any expressiveness in circumcision consonant with this just and scriptural view of baptism? Can any possible analogy be traced betwixt the two rites?

In conclusion, Let us rejoice that Christ has made us free from the covenant of circumcision, that the old Mosaic yoke is broken, that we are the subjects of a dispensation in which God deals with all men alike, and is graciously willing to accept all who come to him through Christ Jesus.

REASONS FOR THE FORMATION OF THE AMERICAN AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

## A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE ORGANIZATION OF THE

BIBLE SOCIETY FOR ALBANY COUNTY AND ITS VICINITY,

IN THE

MEETING-HOUSE OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
IN WESTERLO,

AUGUST 31, 1836.

By A. L. COVELL,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE CITY OF ALBANY.

*Acts* xv. 29. "And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other."

THE parties to this contention were Paul and Barnabas, ministers and missionaries of the church in Antioch. This was the first church gathered among the Gentiles. It was emphatically a missionary church. "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and sent them away."

A nobler example than this, of the true missionary spirit, is not on record. How ardently must that church have been attached to Barnabas and Paul! How highly must they have valued their ministry! Though there were other ministers in the church, yet they seemed to have been less active and useful. They were called, there-

fore, to send their best and most beloved men on missionary service. It must have been a great trial to their faith, yet they seem most cheerfully and unanimously to have complied with this divine appointment. They immediately sent forth their beloved teachers, with FASTING AND PRAYER, that the divine protection and blessing might attend them. In this labor of love, they received a rich reward. After an absence of two or three years, their missionaries returned with the thrilling report of converts multiplied, of numerous churches gathered, and of the wide diffusion of the gospel in different countries.

After this, having remained several years with the church in Antioch, Paul proposed to Barnabas to revisit the churches they had gathered, and assist them in whatever might be requisite to their prosperity. To this proposal, Barnabas readily assented, and it doubtless received the approbation



of the whole church. Barnabas determined to take with them Mark, who had accompanied them through a part of their former mission, but returned before their work was finished. Paul was unwilling to place any dependance upon him again, and declined his company on the new mission. On this point "the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other." Barnabas and Mark sailed to Cyprus; while Paul, choosing Silas for his companion, "went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches."

This difficulty between these first two missionaries to the Gentiles, was, no doubt, regarded at the time as a great evil. Both might have been actuated by improper feeling. Mark was nephew to Barnabas, who might have been too partial to him; and a man who had once forsaken his work without a good reason for it, was not likely to find much favor with Paul, who seems never to have *learned how* to abandon a good work till it was accomplished.

It might have appeared to many very unwise in these brethren, to "depart asunder from each other," even if they could not agree about taking Mark with them. Such a separation, for so slight a cause, might have been considered a very *bad precedent* for those missionaries to give the churches. Its influence upon all future laborers might have been most unhappy; while their enemies might have taken occasion from it to blaspheme the doctrine of Christ, and despise its promoters. But "how can two walk together, except they be agreed?" And what is the benefit of keeping up the appearance of union, when the reality of it does not exist? These apostles would not, could not act on this principle. If they could not go out amicably together, they would separate. The field was wide enough for both, and each would choose his companion, prosecute his labor, and trust in God for the results; and it is easy now to see, that great good resulted from their decision. At first, only one mission had been contemplated, and Paul and Barnabas were to have been the only laborers; but by their separation, two missions were undertaken by four laborers at the same time, so that the whole affair "turned out for the furtherance of the gospel."

This narrative was certainly written for our instruction. It shows us, that *even good men cannot always agree* in the choice of means for the conversion of the world; that if they cannot agree, they had better separate; and that much greater good can be effected by an honorable separation, than by an endeavor to act in concert in things concerning which there exists a real disunion.

I shall not, on this occasion, remark on either of those points, important as they

are to all who pray and labor for the world's conversion; but I will take occasion from them to remark on another and quite recent occurrence, connected with the same great cause, attended by circumstances which all deplore, but which will, I doubt not, be overruled in the good providence of God, for the far more vigorous promotion of the cause of missions, and will result in the conversion of more souls to God. I allude to events which have transpired in the American Bible Society within the past year; events which have sundered from that society the largest Christian denomination in America, and which have led to the formation of the American and Foreign Bible Society. Most persons in this community are aware that such a separation has occurred, and that the last named society has been organized; but with the causes which led to it, and with the circumstances attending it, many are not yet familiar. As the aid of our churches, and of the friends of truth who act with us, will hereafter be solicited in favor of the A. & F. B. S., and not as heretofore for the A. B. S., they have a right to expect from us the reasons for this new measure. In almost all our congregations, the frequent inquiry is, "Why have you formed a new bible society? What do you intend to accomplish by it? Are you not willing to unite with all Christians in giving the bible to mankind, without note or comment?" These inquiries ought to receive a direct and satisfactory answer. I do not wish any man to feel the least sympathy for the new society; I do not desire him to offer one prayer for its prosperity, or to contribute a farthing for its promotion, unless there is good reason to believe it is approved of God. If it be not of God, let it fall! But if it be of God, let us sustain it by our prayers, and by our liberality, in a manner worthy of its RIGHTEOUS ORIGIN, and of its NOBLE AIMS.

The object to be accomplished by the A. & F. B. S. is stated in its Constitution. The first article declares, that its "single object shall be to promote a wider circulation of the holy scriptures, in the MOST FAITHFUL versions that can be procured." The second article requires, that "the Society shall add its efforts to those employed by other Societies, in circulating the scriptures according to its ability, in all lands, whether Christian, Mahomedan or Pagan." Its object all will approve: It is simply to give the *Pure Word of God* to all our fellow men who do not possess it.

Our present inquiry, then, is this: Why is it that the Baptist denomination cannot continue united with the A. B. S. in translating and circulating the bible in foreign languages, as they have done for years past?

Some of the principal facts and Circumstances which have imposed upon us the necessity of withdrawing from the A. B. S., so far as the translation and distribution of the bible in foreign languages are concerned, will now be given. They are such, I think, as will appear sufficient to justify the formation of a new bible society, and to give it a very high claim upon the prayers and munificence of an enlightened christian public.

In 1832, Mr. William Yates, Baptist missionary in Calcutta, published "*A Revised and Improved Edition of the Bengalee New Testament.*" It was first translated by Dr. Cary, and published by him in 1800. "During the life of Dr. C. it passed through seven or eight editions, each of which had the advantage of his critical supervision."

"Mr. Yates went to Calcutta in 1814, made himself thoroughly acquainted with the Bengalee language, and preached many years with much acceptance and success to the natives of Bengal. He is acknowledged by competent judges in Europe, as well as in Asia, to be one of the best Oriental scholars now alive; and his Bengalee New Testament has received from learned pundits and teachers of Calcutta the most unqualified commendation." For assistance in publishing this edition of the New Testament, Mr. Yates applied to the British and Foreign Bible Society. His application was referred to the Calcutta Bible Society, Auxiliary to the British and Foreign. This society, in 1831, refused to encourage any version in which the word *baptizo* was translated to *immerse*; and this was followed by a similar step on the part of the parent society in 1833. The history of these transactions is given by the missionaries themselves, in a letter dated the twenty-fifth of May, 1832. "Some years since," they say, "three of the Pædobaptist brethren, unknown to us, though on the most friendly terms with us, wrote to the Bible Society in England, requesting them not to give assistance to any Indian version, in which the word *baptizo* was translated to *immerse*. None of these lived to see the reply to their communication, and nothing further of a positive nature was done till last year. When you applied to the Bible Society in England for assistance to our version, the secretary of the parent institution wrote to the Bible Society in Calcutta, stating, without any reference to baptism, that if the version was considered a good one, it was their wish to afford assistance. The resolution they forwarded, was as follows: "That the above application respecting an edition of the Bengalee New Testament, be referred to the committee of the Calcutta Auxiliary Society, with authority to contribute towards the expense of an edition, should

they be of opinion that it ought to be encouraged by this Society." After seeing this resolution, we inquired privately whether they intended to give us aid, but could obtain no answer. A short time afterwards, in their annual report, they came forward and boldly declared their sentiments, intimating, too plainly to be misunderstood, that they should encourage no version of the scriptures, how well soever it might be executed, in which the word *baptizo* was translated to *immerse*.

Here, then, the die was cast, so far as the British and Foreign Bible Society, and its auxiliaries, were concerned. It was impossible to receive assistance from them, unless the translation was altered. This the translators could not do, and preserve a good conscience. They therefore determined to apply for assistance to the American Bible Society.

Their letter making this application, was received by the board of managers of the American Bible Society, on the sixth of August of last year. It was referred to the committee on distribution. After long deliberation and discussion, a majority of the committee reported to the board, *against* the application of Mr. Yates. A minority of the committee presented a counter report, and in favor of the application. This was followed by a long discussion in the public meetings of the board. The result of it was, that no assistance should be rendered to the publication of the Bengalee New Testament, because it translated *baptizo*, and its kindred terms, by words which in Bengalee signify to *immerse*.

But this was not all. They did not confine their decision to the single case of Mr. Yates, but adopted a rule by which they would be governed in all cases hereafter. The rule is this: "As the managers are now called upon to aid extensively in circulating the sacred scriptures in languages other than the English, they deem it their duty, in conformity to the obvious spirit of their compact, to adopt the following resolution as the rule of their conduct in making appropriations for the circulation of the scriptures in all foreign tongues: *Resolved*, That in appropriating money for translating, printing, and distributing of the sacred scriptures in foreign languages, the managers feel at liberty to encourage only such versions as conform in the principles of their translation to the common English version, at least so far as that all religious denominations connected with this society can consistently use and circulate said versions in their several schools and communities."

By the adoption of this resolution, three points of very great moment were decided: First, the "*Revised and Improved Edition of the Bengalee New Testament*," perhaps the most faithful and perfect version ever



made in any oriental tongue, was rejected as unworthy the patronage of American Christians! Though thirty millions of our fellow men were speaking the language of Bengal, and though the New Testament in question was the only medium through which they could have access to the revelation of their Maker's will, yet it was rejected, and the rejection plainly implied that they had better have no bible in "their schools and communities" than such an one. They had better grope on still in their darkness, than read a New Testament which should tell them, as plainly as Paul did the Romans and Colossians, that they were "buried with Christ in baptism."

Another point decided by this resolution, is that *any* translation of the holy scriptures into any language, which shall render *baptizo* and its cognates by terms which signify *immerse*, should receive no encouragement from the A. B. S. This was a virtual declaration, that all aid should hereafter be withheld from every translation of the scriptures which had been made, or was now in progress, by our denomination. This was speaking once for all, and in a manner too plain and peremptory to be misunderstood.

A third point necessarily implied in this resolution, is, that every translation of the scriptures made by our denomination into any language, is considered and treated as *sectarian*, and as unworthy to be "circulated in schools and communities." This was certainly speaking very loudly to us, and required some action on our part, that would be *public, decided, and final*. The two largest bible societies in the world had wholly and forever refused all aid, and all co-operation with us in giving the bible to the heathen, unless we changed the principle on which our translations had ever been made.

Under these circumstances, only two things were possible. One was to succumb to the dictation of the British and American societies; throw away the toils, and tears and prayers of Cary, Marshman, Judson and Yates. We should then have only to say to our future translators, "When you come to *baptisma* or *baptizo*, do not pray to God to enable you to *translate* those words faithfully. Do not, by 'diligent study endeavor to ascertain their exact meaning;' that's a *sectarian* proceeding. You are not to search the language into which you translate, for words corresponding to them in meaning, by which you may give their exact import to those for whom you are translating: that will be considered an attempt to make the heathen all Baptists. It will be denominated, both in England and America, 'a scheme of proselytism.' This we can never endure. Therefore, when you come to these troublesome words, read over carefully the instructions given to the

authors of the 'Common English Version,' and proceed accordingly." This was one course of action, open for us to pursue. Another was, to form a bible society of our own, appoint our own translators, instruct them to make the "most faithful" versions possible in all languages into which they should translate the scriptures, and then submit those translations to the supreme control of Almighty God, and to the enlightened judgment of the Christian world. This last alternative we have adopted; and on the thirteenth of May last, organized, in the city of New York, the American and Foreign Bible Society.

We have now in our country two national bible societies. The point on which they differ is easily understood, and should be carefully considered. It is this: The A. B. S. requires that all translations of the Bible into foreign languages, must, on the subject of baptism, be made on the same principle with the "Common English Version."

The A. & F. B. S. requires that the words relating to baptism, shall be translated by the same rule that other words are; that they shall be faithfully rendered by words of the same meaning in the languages into which translations are made.

This is the only practical point that divides the two societies. Let us, for a moment, fix our attention upon this point. It is well known that our present English Bible was translated by order of King James of England, and first published in 1611. By order of the King, *baptizo* and its kindred terms were not translated, but transferred into the language. This was introducing a new word into the language, a word which no one would understand unless they were acquainted with Greek, and whose meaning they could not ascertain except by inquiring of their teachers, or from dictionaries and lexicons. These words having now been used in our language more than two hundred years, have become familiar to English readers, though *at first* they would have conveyed to them no meaning whatever. So far as the translation was concerned, therefore, the ordinance of baptism *was left entirely in the dark*. No one, without some knowledge of Greek, could learn from these words in the English bible, what was the mind of the Spirit in this great duty.

Now, the question to be determined is, Was the principle of translation a good one? Why not translate what God has enjoined in the ordinance of baptism, as well as what he has enjoined in any other duty? Had the Holy Ghost revealed in Greek, what it would be unsafe to publish in "plain English?" what the American Bible Society cannot "consistently circulate in schools and communities?"

We have also another question to determine. How ought Christian missionaries *now* to be governed in translating the bible into the languages of the heathen? Ought they to be bound by the command of a bigoted king, now two hundred years in his grave; or ought they to render every word of the holy bible as faithfully as possible?

In April, 1833, the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, convened in Salem, Mass. instructed their missionaries engaged in the translation of the scriptures, "to endeavor, by earnest prayer and diligent study, to ascertain the precise meaning of the original text, and to express that meaning as exactly as the nature of the languages into which they shall translate the bible will permit, and to transfer no words which are capable of being translated." Such is the rule by which our missionaries are to be governed. Mark its simplicity and its justice. First, they are to pray for divine help: That certainly is right. Then they are to "ascertain the precise meaning of the original text." Who can object to that? Then they are to "express that meaning as exactly as the nature of the languages into which they translate will permit." Is that objectionable? Then they are directed to "transfer no word which is capable of being translated." And why should they? Can the heathen understand a Greek word introduced into their language, better than a word of their own with which they have always been familiar? What possible objections to this rule of translation can be made by any intelligent, unprejudiced Christian? And yet for literally following this rule, in his revision of the Bengalee New Testament, Mr. Yates, one of the most learned and pious missionaries on earth, has been refused any encouragement from the A. B. S. in its publication. Is this charitable? But this is not all. For adhering to this rule in the translation of the scriptures, they have refused all co-operation with the most numerous denomination of Christians connected with them, *of whose money they have now thousands in their treasury*. Has that been done with an enlarged spirit of Christian liberality? Have the men who have done this, above all others, been washed white of *sectarianism*? Judge of their principle of translation by the Saviour's golden rule, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Suppose you had no bible, and an able, faithful translator was about to provide it for you: Would you want him to translate "faithfully" every part of it, so that you could easily read and understand it *all* in your own tongue? Would you be willing he should give you what relates to baptism, in words you never saw or heard of before? words whose meaning you would have to learn by

repeated inquiry of your teacher, and about which one teacher would tell you one thing, and another, another? Could you consent to have him leave you thus in the dark in this matter? Well, if you would not like to be treated in this manner yourself, then, by our Saviour's rule, you ought not to be willing any fellow creature should be treated in the same manner. And yet this is exactly the manner in which the American Bible Society requires *all translations* to be made, which share its patronage. Let any missionary on earth, however learned or pious, translate the bible into any foreign language, by earnest prayer to God, by ascertaining the precise meaning of the original text, and by expressing that meaning exactly in the language into which he translates, transferring no word, but translating all, and the American Bible Society will refuse him all assistance in its publication! and have besides a standing resolution, which recognizes such a translation as sectarian, and unworthy to be "circulated in schools and communities!" With such a rule of action, American Baptists never can agree; in such treatment of the heathen world, they cannot participate; to such concealment of the word of life, they cannot be accessory. On this point the contention between the two bible societies has been "sharp," and they are "parted asunder the one from the other."

There were other circumstances, also, which contributed to bring about this result. Translations like those which are now rejected, had been patronized by the British and American societies, up to the time when these difficulties arose. The British and Foreign Bible Society had patronized translations of the scriptures in various eastern languages, made by Dr. Carey, and in which the words in dispute were rendered exactly as Yates and Judson now translate them. It was not till the year 1833, that their aid in printing and circulating these versions was withheld; and the American Bible Society had patronized versions of the same kind, until 1835. Now, when the course of these societies was so *suddenly* changed, and they refused to patronize versions which *for years* had received their aid, it was evident that new motives and principles were controlling their operations, and that the denomination whose translations they had entirely and forever rejected could no longer co-operate with them.

The case was rendered still more aggravating, by the fact, that while they had patronized versions which render *baptizo* and its cognates by terms signifying *immersion*, other versions had been as freely patronized which render the same words by terms which signify *to sprinkle*, *to moisten*, *to wash*, "*to throw water at any one*," &c.



Rev. J. S. Harris, missionary to the Seneca Indians, translated the Gospel by Luke into their language in 1830. Mr. Wright, his successor, says the meaning of the word most frequently used for *baptize*, is *to throw water at one, to sprinkle, or spatter* as children do at play, or in anger; or *to drench*, as parents among the Indians often do in disciplining their children; or *“to pour a stream of water on one.”* Other translations had been made by Pædobaptist missionaries, no more to the purpose than this. Such versions had been “encouraged” by the American Bible Society, as well as those made by Baptists. Of this we never complained. Our money and theirs was paid into a common treasury, and we considered it no more than common justice that the translations of all should be supported. The different denominations, and missionaries *who made the translations*, would, as we supposed, be *responsible to God and to mankind* for them. On this principle, we would have gladly co-operated with the American Bible Society until all nations should have read in “their own tongues the wonderful works of God.” But when the ground was boldly taken, that the bible, when it speaks of a solemn Christian ordinance, should not be translated; that the millions of our race who have not the bible, should read nothing of baptism, or be compelled to read it in Greek, we could go no further. We here feel it our duty to “contend earnestly for the faith,” though the contention should become so sharp as to part us from those we love in this blessed work.

But the American Bible Society has patronized versions, different from those mentioned, and objectionable on other grounds.

The Russian Bible, e. g. does not translate *baptizo*, but substitutes for it a word which signifies *to cross*; so that it would read, “Jesus made and crossed more disciples than John.” “They that received his word gladly were crossed.” “They went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he crossed him.” This could be circulated in Russian “schools and communities. But should another version read, that “they who received his word gladly were immersed;” that “they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he immersed him;” the managers “do not feel at liberty to encourage it!” Of course, then, we who had rather be *immersed* than *crossed*, must support our own translations.\*

I have frequently, of late, been reminded of one great objection to the formation of a new bible society. It is said that “it will interrupt the harmony of Christians, and

tend more than any thing else to perpetuate a needless controversy about baptism.

It can hardly be possible that a candid man would seriously urge this objection, after he had carefully considered it. If the words in question are not to be translated; if they are to be transferred into all the languages of the heathen, they will become the subject of everlasting dispute, just as they have been in our language. Converts will ask their teachers what these words mean? Baptists will tell them they mean *immersion*: Pædobaptists will tell them they mean *to wet, to wash, to sprinkle, or to throw water at them*. Here they will be involved in flat contradiction of each other. *The very Bible itself*, for want of being properly translated, will be the cause of perpetual controversy among three-fourths of the human race, who have not yet received it. Who can be willing to throw this “apple of discord” among the millions of Asia? The way to stop controversy about baptism, is to let the bible speak for itself, and to let all men read and obey it. To endeavor to stop this, or any other controversy, by obscuring, concealing, or withholding the truth, is *popery*. The great sin of Martin Luther against “His Holiness,” was, that he translated the bible into the common language of his country, and was for having every body read it. The Pope opposed this. He would have men pray in Latin, and read no bible at all. Here the “contention became so sharp between them,” that they parted forever.

The Baptists are now committing, on a large scale, the same sin that Martin Luther did. They are translating and printing the Bible in the different languages of mankind, and are anxious that all the world should read it. This they believe to be the most effectual means to promote truth, suppress error, and “stop controversy.” To suppress any part of truth, to obscure it, or in any way withhold it from the knowledge of mankind, they believe to be the direct way to promote error and perpetuate contention. Let those brethren who introduce among the millions of the East the same cause of controversy which for centuries has distressed and divided the British and American churches, beware of arrogating to themselves *EXCLUSIVELY* the title of “peacemakers.” Let them not “heal the hurt of God’s people slightly; crying peace, peace, when there is no peace,” and but faint prospects of it.

Another great objection to our society, is, that if the bible is translated as we would have it, all who read it will of course become Baptists. On this account, it is urged that we ought not to insist upon such a translation; that some how, in a spirit of generous compromise, this point should be

\* See Judd’s Review of Stewart, Appendix, p. 175.

yielded, and men left free to practice immersion or sprinkling as they please.

Let us look at this objection. Let it be admitted, that if the scriptures were translated as we contend they ought to be, all converted heathen would read and be immersed. What then; Would they have done wrong? The very men who make this objection, confess that immersion is valid baptism, "good and acceptable to God." What harm would be done, then, if all the heathen should believe and be immersed? No error would be taught or practised; nothing wrong believed or done. What then are the dreadful evils that would result from the universal practice of immersion? Does it make a man less prayerful to immerse him than it does to sprinkle him? Does it make him less spiritually minded, less active, less liberal in the cause of God? The men who make the objection, do not pretend this. If the believing heathen were all sprinkled, they do not pretend that they would be any more holy or useful than if they were immersed. Or if part were sprinkled, others poured, and others immersed, it would be no better than if all were immersed. Let the objection stand then, in all its force. Let it be admitted that if all men should read the Bible faithfully translated, it would make "immersion the only baptism." All then would be right, our opponents being the judges. For though they contend that something else "will do as well," they have nothing to propose that will DO BETTER.

Take another view of this objection. It is now admitted on all sides that immersion was the practice of John, of Christ, of the Apostles, and of their successors for several hundred years. Immersion was then the UNIVERSAL PRACTICE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Suppose then that our translations should make this the universal practice of the Christian Church again. The church would then be, on this point, just what she was in her best and purest days. Every body would be satisfied with their baptism. Controversy would cease. The churches "would then have rest" from strife and division; and "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they would be multiplied." Should our translations effect all this, would they do the world an injury? And are they to be rejected because they have this tendency? Will they make the church too apostolic? too much like Christ.

I will here waive any further consideration of the subject in this point of view. I hope and pray, that as we feel justified before God and mankind, in the organization of the American and Foreign Bible Society, we shall be united and liberal in its support. By the blessing of God, our missionaries have already translated the Holy

scriptures into languages spoken by more than half the population of the globe. They are still prayerfully and zealously engaged in this responsible, yet blessed work. We intend never to rest in this great enterprise, till the "Lamp of Life" shines upon the pathway of every dweller upon earth.

Under existing circumstances, what ought to be the spirit by which the half million of American Baptists should be animated? God in his holy providence, has, by the labors of holy men, *our own brethren*, furnished these pure translations of the word of life to our hands. He has put them into our hands in this eventful age, and just as the way is opening for the diffusion of the gospel among all nations. What can be his design in this, unless it is that we should, WITHOUT DELAY, give to mankind a pure, unaltered, unobscured bible. As the angel having the everlasting gospel to preach to them who dwell on the earth, is now taking his flight in the midst of heaven, let us fill his hands with these "most faithful" versions of the blessed word, and bid him scatter them over the whole earth!

I rejoice that the board of the A. & F. B. S. have recently appropriated \$2500 towards the publication of the Revised Edition of the Bengalee New Testament, by Mr. YATES. So that the labors of that devoted missionary are not to be lost, nor the precious word denied to thirty-two millions of our fellow men who are ready to receive it. This, however, is only the starting point. These waters of life which are beginning to flow, must roll on in a deeper, broader channel, till like the waters of Noah, they shall cover the whole earth—not to destroy, but to save.

Could either of you present ANY THING to a fellow creature in heathen darkness, it would be the bible. This would be your first, best gift for him. There are many hundreds of your fellow men begging of your missionaries for bibles, and begging in vain, because they have none to give them. Would you not like to put a few more bibles into the hands of your missionaries, and let them give them to the anxious heathen, who wait all night at the missionary's doos, that they may be in season to ask for the precious boon in the morning?

A happy convert who loved his bible said to his teacher, "How could you christians, in your country, keep this sweet honey so long among yourselves, and not send any of it to us?" The teacher made the best apology he could. "But," continued his shrewd disciple, "it was not right for you Christians to be saying SO LONG to each other, how soon this honey is! how SWEET this honey is! Why did you not



break off a piece of the sweet comb, and send it to us?"

Ye friends of the Bible and of mankind, when in your prayers to Almighty God, you say, "How precious is thy word unto me! sweeter also than honey or the honey-

comb?" will you think to break off a piece of the "sweet comb," and send it to your perishing fellow men? "As ye would that men should do unto you, DO YE EVEN SO TO THEM."

## TERMS OF COMMUNION.

(CIRCULAR LETTER OF THE HUDSON RIVER ASSOCIATION,)

By S. H. CONE, D. D.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—In accordance with a resolution passed at our last annual meeting, "*the terms of communion*," will claim your attention, as the subject of our present circular address. It is to be regretted that the signs of the times should ever indicate the expediency of presenting this subject to your consideration, in a controversial shape; but since necessity is laid upon us, we desire to enter upon its investigation with all that alacrity which the love of revealed truth, and supreme regard for Zion's King, and unyielding attachment to the order of his house, are calculated to inspire.

The phrase "communion," or "fellowship," is used in different senses in the sacred writings. It frequently denotes that holy enjoyment of the divine presence, and that soul comforting participation of the Redeemer's fulness, which it is the privilege of believers to realize. The saints are joined to the Lord by one Spirit; they draw water out of the wells of salvation; God is their dwelling-place in all generations; and it is therefore said, Truly their fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. This fellowship does not necessarily stand connected with church government or relationship; it is neither confined to time nor place, nor does it bend to the control of earthly circumstances. It is felt by Jacob with a stone for his pillow; it drives away the fears and pains of the thief upon the cross; it cheers the hearts of Paul and Silas, though beaten with many stripes and thrust into the inner prison; and it converts the desolate isle of Patmos into a paradise of heavenly rapture. The terms of this communion, all centre in the rich and distinguishing grace of God.

The expression is sometimes used in a large and comprehensive sense, to describe that fraternal affection and spiritual inter-

course, which all those who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth may righteously maintain with each other. Individuals attached to the different denominations of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Quakers, &c. may have *good reason* to entertain a favorable opinion of each other's Christian exercises; they may unite their efforts to multiply and distribute copies of the Bible, and send the gospel of salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth; they may take sweet counsel together, and be mutual helpers of each others' joy; and their communion will be proportioned to the evidence which the parties furnish, of maintaining a close walk with God. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. But as this fellowship in the gospel is enjoyed by individual believers who never unite with a particular church; as it exists in different degrees, according to the strength of their confidence that God has begun a good work in the heart, without any reference to the ordinances or regulations of his house, it is an entirely different thing from *church fellowship*, and is by no means to be confounded therewith.

In modern phraseology the word "communion," is employed, by common consent, as expressive of that fellowship which experimental Christians have with the Saviour of sinners, and with one another, in the ordinance of the Lord's supper; and this use of the phrase seems to be justified by the apostle's language, 1 Cor. x. 16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" The single point, therefore, which we have now before us is, to answer the inquiry, *What are the indispensable terms of this communion?* or, in other words, what prerequisites

of admission to the Lord's supper are marked out, in the New Testament, for the observance of the churches of Christ to the end of the world? To this inquiry we reply, *regeneration, baptism, and a conversation such as becometh the gospel of Christ*; and in proof of the correctness of this reply, we appeal to the law and to the testimony.

The children of God are bound to give thanks always to their heavenly Father, because he hath from the beginning chosen them to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, whereunto they are called by the gospel; and then, *as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*; and to manifest their attachment to the laws, doctrines and ordinances, once delivered to the saints. The primitive churches, constituted under the immediate direction of the inspired apostles, were composed of self-condemned sinners, who were by nature children of wrath even as others; but being pricked in their hearts and quickened by the Spirit of God, fled for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel. They believed the testimony given of God's dear Son, and having gladly received the truth, *were baptized both men and women*. To the first gospel church in Jerusalem it is said, "The Lord added daily such as should be saved, and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The church at Corinth consisted of those who were "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, and who called upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. The members of the church at Colosse, had "put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;" and the brethren at Rome, were "the called of Jesus Christ, beloved of God, called to be saints." Now if these apostolic churches were erected upon correct principles, (and who so contumacious or schismatic as to deny it?) they are certainly to us infallible guides, and present us with a perfect pattern. If they received only such as professed to be born of God, and gave evidence that they were begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, *we should imitate their example*; "and if there come any unto us and bring not this doctrine," we are commanded "not to receive him into our house, neither bid him God speed;" for he that biddeth him God speed; that is, he that welcometh to the privileges of the church, "him that abideth not in the doctrine Christ, is partaker of his evil deeds." It is therefore an established principle in Baptist churches to require of all candidates for admission, a declaration of what God hath done for their

souls; and when satisfactory evidence of a "change of heart" is exhibited, the *first scriptural term of communion*, is elicited by the church. Should this fundamental principle ever be abandoned, we hesitate not to say, the fine gold will become dim, the glory will depart from us, and the vengeance of Him who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks may be justly apprehended.

That baptism is a "term of communion," is manifest from the *design and order* of that ordinance, as well as from the uniform practice of the apostles.

It is the *design of baptism*, among other important particulars, to exhibit the existence of a new relationship, and to declare to all around, the interesting fact that the individual baptized has come out from the world and enlisted under the banner of Christ. In this view of the subject, it is not merely the answer of a good conscience towards God, but it is also a grateful and public recognition of that grand line of distinction which the Redeemer has established between the "kingdom of darkness," and that "kingdom which is not of this world. For as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Gal. iii. 27. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. vi. 4. As it is evident that a man must enter into the kingdom, before he can be entitled to the immunities of a subject; that he must be received into the fellowship of a particular church, before he can enjoy the privileges of that church; even so, it is equally plain, that baptism, upon profession of faith in the Messiah, must remain an indispensable term of communion, until it can be proved that unbaptized persons were added to the churches planted by the apostles in different parts of the world. And this will appear yet more abundantly if we consider,

The *order* which is uniformly observed in the New Testament, with reference to Baptism and the Lord's supper. When the Great Head of the church sent forth his ministering servants to build up his kingdom in our ruined world, he gave them commission in the following words; *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*. The language is lucid and definite. It directed them *first* to teach, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, to *preach the Gospel to every creature*. When the word preached was accompanied by an unction from the Holy One, men were made wise unto salvation; they were effectually taught; they were made disciples; and then, and not till then, were the apostles commanded



to baptize them. After this, they were to instruct them to observe all things enjoined upon them by the Saviour; and among the all things, who dare deny to the Lord's supper a place? Since the Redeemer has sufficient wisdom to devise the most suitable ordinances, either for the comfort of his people, or as a test of their obedience; and since all power is given him to make laws in Zion, and fix the order of their observance; to his authority all Christians should certainly submit. But it is plain that baptism must precede the communion, not only because the Lord Christ hath so decreed, but because this order is necessary in the very nature of things, if there be an adaptation of the sign to the thing signified. We must first be made alive, before we need bread to sustain life; and in like manner, the ordinance which shadows forth the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, must of necessity, go before that which holds out to us in a figure the bread which came down from heaven, whereof if a man eat, he shall live for ever.

That this statement is correct, we most assuredly gather from the unvarying practice of the apostles themselves.

The preaching of Peter, upon a certain notable occasion, produced such an astonishing effect that thousands cried out, Men and brethren what shall we do to be saved? The preacher promptly replies, Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. What follows? They that gladly receive the word WERE BAPTIZED. After baptism they were added to the church in Jerusalem, and then, participated in the communion, or the breaking of bread.

The conduct of Paul was precisely similar to that of his brother Peter. He came to Corinth, and taught the word of God among its inhabitants. *Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized.* These baptized believers were then constituted into a gospel church, and kept the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as delivered to them by the apostle. Acts xviii. 1 Cor. ii. 2. If therefore, the uniform practice of the apostles justly challenges our imitation, we must inviolably adhere to the order which they have established.

The last term of church communion we have named, is a godly walk and conversation; and this position is easily maintained, both upon the principles of reason and revelation. The children of God are holy brethren; a royal priesthood—a peculiar people, zealous of good works. This description of them is given by one who cannot err; and it would certainly be incongruous and unnatural for such persons to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. How can two walk together except

they be agreed? What communion hath light with darkness and what fellowship hath Christ with Belial? are questions which need no comment;—they answer themselves. In extending the right hand of fellowship, therefore, a church must be satisfied that the individual soliciting admission has scriptural views of himself, and of God, and of the way of salvation by Christ alone, and of the work of the Spirit, and of the holy tendency of divine truth; and hence we are directed to mark and avoid those whose erroneous sentiments cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned. Rom. xvi. Moreover the candidate for church communion must not only converse about the things of God in a proper manner, but his deportment must correspond with his holy profession. If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, we must not keep company with such an one, no not to eat. 1 Cor. v. 11. and that course of conduct which cuts off from the church one who is already a member, must be, by parity of reasoning, an unsurmountable obstacle against admission to its privileges.

Our sentiments with reference to the terms of communion, have, in different ages and countries, occasioned the opprobrious epithets of “bigoted, uncharitable, self-righteous,” &c. to be heaped upon us with an unsparing hand; but these are weak and powerless weapons when employed against those who are armed with the sword of the Spirit, in defence of a divine institution. We shall close this epistle by replying briefly to some of the most plausible objections which are constantly urged against the sentiments we have advanced.

First objection. “*You lay too much stress upon baptism by making it an indispensable term of communion.*”

To this we reply; We pay no greater regard to it, nor do we give it a higher place in our system, than the Lord Christ hath enjoined, or the apostles and primitive Christians, by their example, have warranted. And here we may ask, why should more stress be laid upon the Lord's supper than upon baptism; and why should many professing Christians so earnestly advocate the observance of the former, while they pervert, or entirely neglect the latter? Were not both ordinances instituted by the same Lord, and do they not, therefore, come to us clothed with the same authority? We know that Pædobaptists are in the habit of calling baptism a nonessential; an external rite; a mere ceremony; &c. If this be true, we would inquire, what more is the supper? *Is it a Saviour?* But if these sacred institutions, be indeed *as we*

believe, signs of important and essential truths, baptism is unquestionably as significant as the breaking of bread, and exhibits, *emblematically*, a large proportion of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel. Upon an investigation of the New Testament, we find that baptism, of the two, is much the more frequently mentioned, and baptized believers are affectionately and repeatedly exhorted, so to walk in Christ Jesus their Lord, as in that ordinance they have put him on. Taking then the Holy Book as our only and all sufficient rule of faith and practice, we have the highest authority for saying, We give to baptism, which Christ appointed as the first gospel institute, as a test of his children's obedience, and a lively emblem of their renewal by the Holy Ghost, exactly the situation which the master of the house has designated; and with a thus saith the Lord, sounding in our ears and penetrating our hearts, it is not possible that we should listen to the doctrines or commandments of men.

A second objection, charges us with causing a *separation between the children of the same Heavenly Father*.

Suppose we grant that baptism is an insuperable barrier in the way of our communing, in church capacity, with unbaptized persons; does it necessarily result from this concession, that the blame righteously attaches itself to the skirts of our garment? Shall those who understand and keep the ordinances, in their nature, order, and design, as they were originally delivered to the churches, be condemned? and those who depart from them, and embrace a "figment of their own imagination," be justified? *God forbid!* We hesitate not to say, most implicitly, that baptism is a separating line, but it is one of the Lord's own making, and we endeavor constantly, both by preaching and example, to enlighten the minds of our Pædobaptist friends on the subject. We warn them of their errors; we hold up to them the truth; we point them definitely to chapter and verse; and we exhort every believer among them, quite as often as they wish to hear us, to arise and be baptized and wash away their sins, (in a figure,) calling upon the name of the Lord. We are honest and sincere in these declarations, and in making them thus plainly, it must be evident to the candid and judicious, that we cannot have any by-ends, or measures of mere expediency to promote. We wish the truth, and the truth alone as it is in Jesus, every where to prevail; and we are grieved in heart, that those whom we respect and love on so many other accounts, should, in this particular, persist in treading the pathway of disobedience, boldly rejecting the counsel of God in not being baptized according to his

commandment. If our veracity and Christian affection, touching this whole matter, be unjustly called in question, we are permitted to adopt the language of a Baptist, and say: Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to youward. 2 Cor. i. 12.

A third objection states, that it is *the Lord's table, and therefore we have no right to hinder those who wish to approach it*.

That it is the Lord's table, is the appropriate and sufficient answer to this objection. Were it ours, we might cheerfully admit to it the objector and his friends; but since it is confessedly the *Lord's table*, we dare welcome to it only such as HE invites. The disciples were baptized before Christ instituted and administered to them the supper. John the Baptist was sent to prepare a people for the Lord, and the disciples were evidently among the number of those who justify God; and if so, they must have been necessarily baptized with the baptism of John; otherwise they could not have been obedient hearers and doers of the word, and imitators of the example of their Lord and master. Luke vii. 29. Matt. iii. 23, 17. 1 Peter, ii. 21. In perfect conformity with this view of the subject, are the words of Peter: "Wherefore of these men which have complained with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from THE BAPTISM OF JOHN, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." Acts i. 21, 22. Here we learn that Peter and his brethren began their Christian profession at the baptism of John, and hence the inference is irresistible, that there were none but Baptists with our Lord when he gave them the bread and cup, and said, *Do this in remembrance of me*. As the sacred oracles, therefore, uniformly teach that Christians, in the apostles' days, were baptized before they came together in one place for the breaking of bread, we are confirmed in the sentiment, that the only guests invited to partake of this feast are such as have been, upon profession of their faith, buried with Christ in baptism; nor can we approach the table with the unbaptized, without acting in direct opposition to the precept and example of Him, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

A fourth objection is presented in this shape: *We conscientiously believe ourselves to be baptized; you are not the judge; to our own master we stand or fall*.

This objection brings us at once to the question, *What is Christian Baptism?* Is it sprinkling, or is it pouring? With the



New Testament in our hands, we most confidently and unhesitatingly answer, neither. *It is immersion* in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. And here we cannot but say to our cavelling friend, *when were you baptized?* "In infancy." Are unconscious babes, or the unbelieving, unprofessing seed of pious parents proper subjects of baptism? Whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, upon the testimony of God we are obliged to answer, *no*. These things were not so in the beginning; for it is written, "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized;" Acts 2. And the Jailor was baptized, he and all his, straightway, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. Acts xvi. Consequently those who believe and rejoice in Christ Jesus are, according to the scriptures, the only persons to whom we are authorized to administer the ordinance of baptism. But we are told that whether Pædobaptists have perverted Christian baptism, both in its design and subjects, or not, we have no right to judge. This is equivalent to saying that an individual ought to be admitted to church fellowship because he thinks himself entitled to that privilege, without reference to the opinion which the church may entertain upon the subject. It requires no argument to prove the obscurity of this position. To adopt it would speedily ultimate in the dissolution of any society. That there must be an agreement in sentiment between a church and a candidate for admission to its privileges; and that the church must necessarily judge of the candidate's qualifications, are both self-evident and scriptural truths. Since Christ then has commanded us to hold fast till he come, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, we are under the most sacred obligations to exhort one another daily; to warn the unruly, to look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; and to be very careful, not only to venerate his institutions ourselves, but also that they be observed in their purity, by all such as solicit communion with us at the table of the Lord.

A fifth objection, viz: *That the saints will all commune together in Heaven, and ought therefore to do so on earth*, is thought to be a very strong one, but really we are not able to perceive its force. We rejoice in the anticipation of that perfect union and uninterrupted fellowship, which the general assembly and church of the first born,

whose names are written in Heaven, shall, to all eternity, enjoy; but whatever may be the terms of communion in the world of glory, we are fully persuaded that while here, the revealed will of Christ, and not what shall take place after death, should be the only man of our counsel, *a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path*; and we are equally certain, that when we see Jesus as he is, and love him as we ought, the least of his commandments will not be esteemed either trifling or nonessential.

The last objection which our limits will allow us to notice, supposes that *strict communion is inconsistent with brotherly love and Christian forbearance*.

By adverting to the distinction made in the commencement of this letter, between communion with God, our fellow-Christians, and a particular church, this objection will be stripped of all its difficulties. It will there be seen that real believers may hold converse with the Deity, and love each other as brethren in the Lord, without walking together in church relationship. *The Baptists* differ from all others in their views of a Gospel Church, and the scriptural qualifications for admission to its privileges; but *these views* we believe to be coincident with the directions of the Saviour, and the example of apostles and primitive Christians and having maintained them in the face of persecution, danger, and death, from the days of Paul to the present moment, we cannot abandon them, until convinced that we have hitherto misapprehended altogether the language of the New Testament. Nor can this course of conduct be righteously construed into a breach of brotherly love and Christian forbearance, until it can be proved that we ought to love men more than we love God, and that the charity which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, requires us to disregard the commandments and dispense with the ordinances of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Finally, brethren, Farewell! Adhere steadfastly to the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, as he hath delivered them to us; and as there is *one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism*, so we beseech you, *that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The Lord be with you all, Amen.*





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